

WRITING AND REPETITION: ONTIC WRITING
AND QUESTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY
IN HARUKI MURAKAMI'S *1Q84*

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

I will examine the “Q” of *IQ84* as an invitation for questions about authenticity that result in an acknowledgement of the necessity to interpret one’s own heritage and construct meaning in one’s own present context. I will use examples of *IQ84*’s narrative structure, especially the parallel narratives of the protagonist dyad and various examples of appropriations of Orwellian themes within, especially the example of a central organizing force in the character Leader, to show the inaccessibility of history as “archaeological authenticity.” Rather, following Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, I will argue that authenticity is achieved as one accepts the inescapable recognition that heritage is already interpreted, and one accepts the necessity of interpreting one’s own context in order to situate one’s being within—making authentic being a hermeneutic process, rather than an archaeological process.

The realization that one’s relationship with the world is necessarily a hermeneutic process of appropriating one’s cultural fragments and adapting them to a new narrative of being is a process that I will call *ontic writing*. Ontic writing emerges from the tension of one’s own struggle to situate one’s being between fate (perceived as heritage or historical truth as inevitable) and free-will (as one’s ability to interpret and thus inflect their lived experience) as one deliberately weaves one’s own narrative out of the fragments of one’s received heritage. My analysis relies heavily upon Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, with Jacques Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play” as the primary analytic framework.

for David Emerson Reiser

October 21, 1925–August 12, 2013

自分
が自分
にならないで
だれが
自分
になる

相田みつを

大正十三年—平成三年

*I do not become myself
who becomes me*

—Aida Mistuo (1924-1991)

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OVERTURE

Léos Janáček's *Symphonietta* sets the thematic stage for Haruki Murakami's *1Q84*, and establishes an important chronological reference, the year 1926, by appearing in the opening sentence of *1Q84*. Many critical analyses of Murakami's writing style have acknowledged his use of major symphonic or operatic works as a thematic frame for his novels. For his part, Janáček was deeply inspired by folklore, to which he frequently turned for authentic inspiration for his musical compositions. His *Symphonietta* was commissioned as a military fanfare, but was ultimately delivered to celebrate the "Freedom of the Individual in Society" at the Czech Republic's 1926 anniversary of independence from the Habsburg Dynasty.¹ As a folklorist and musical theorist, Janáček explored the possible connections between folklore, music, and language in his once popular "speech-melody" theory.²

My thesis³ emerges from a similar interest in authenticity and individuality, and the relationship those have to collective identity and a culture, especially as expressed in folklore. By *authenticity* I do not mean some appeal to a past, undefiled purity, or that which is located in any external, stable location or cultural history and disclosed through some metaphorical archaeological pursuit (I call this archaeological authenticity). Rather,

¹ The Czech Republic was the only functioning democracy in Central Europe during the interwar period (Brackett).

² "Janáček and the speech-melody myth" by John Tyrrell appeared in *The Musical Times*, Vol. 111, No. 1530 (Aug., 1970), pp. 793-796

³ My own title *Writing and Repetition* is an unveiled 'play-giarism' of the intersection of Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference* (1967) and Kojin Karatani's *History and Repetition* (1989).

I use *authenticity* in a Heideggerian sense, as that which is created as original through appropriation of fragments from one's own cultural heritage, transposing those fragments into a new individual narrative. The originality expressed in the particular appropriations, transpositions, and in the act of interpreting the world will form the basis of *authenticity* as I use the term (I call this interpreted authenticity). I also introduce a new term, "ontic writing," for the act of appropriating and transposing the cultural fragments which are expressed primarily through writing. Ontic writing then is a form of authentic writing, writing as mythopoesis that situates one's self in one's perceived world by rewriting the culture of that world.

Murakami's *IQ84* provides an example of ontic writing found in the secondary character Fuka-Eri, whose journey from extreme isolation and near total loss of individuality is the impetus that propels the action of *IQ84*. However, as pivotal as Fuka-Eri's writing is for the narrative impetus of *IQ84*, her story is obscured by the surface narrative of the protagonist dyad, Aomame and Tengo. Fuka-Eri frees herself from the bonds of her father's cult by appropriating fragments of her cultural heritage, especially its folklore, transposing them into a personal narrative that creates a sense of stable meaning she can leverage to propel herself, her identity, into "authentic being." My notion of ontic writing is derived primarily from key features of Martin Heidegger's *dasein*, from his 1926 landmark work, *Being and Time (BT)*, and draws upon Derrida's *The Postcard*, especially for the emphasis on writing. As Fuka-Eri's personal narrative is secondary, occurring in the shadows of *IQ84*, I will first look at the narrative structure of *IQ84* itself through the intermediate lens offered by Jacques Derrida's essay, "Structure, Sign and Play" (*SSP*) from his seminal 1967 work, *Writing and Difference*, to free the

young girl's embedded narrative from the entanglements of Murakami's surface plot. The next step, within the analytic optic provided by *SSP*, will look closer at Fuka-Eri as a character, an allegory, and as an author, with an appropriation of Heidegger's philosophical apparatus in *BT*.

To reflect the two-step analysis noted above, I have organized and named sections of my thesis with a two-layered structure. Taking a cue from Murakami's use of Janáček to frame *IQ84*, the superstructure follows the practices for naming movements of musical forms, especially symphonies. The inner structure uses the title of Derrida's essay, "Structure, Sign and Play," as the framework for analyzing Fuka-Eri's emergence as *authentic dasein*, following Heidegger. I hope this structure will provide a useful guide to the arc of this composition and keep the reader oriented throughout the multilayered analysis embedded within.

I begin with a "Prelude" to establish the primary questions of this thesis and of *IQ84* the struggle between fate and free will and the implications of this struggle for Heideggerian authenticity as defined above. In the section named "Context," I discuss the contemporary literary context of *IQ84*, as seen by several well-reputed reviewers. I then focus particular attention on *IQ84*'s contextual inheritance from the dystopic tradition, beginning with Orwell's *1984*, then questioning the necessary appropriations and commentary that Orwell himself made of previous works about totalitarian dystopias.

Having established a literary context for my treatment of *IQ84*, the greater part of my thesis is in turn organized into three sections: "Structure" considers two primary narrative structures occurring within *IQ84*, dialogic narrative and embedded stories, including Fuka-Eri's mythopoesis in the story *Air Chrysalis*. "Sign" will address the

signification and significance of the novel's vacuous central organizing principle, that of a feigned center symbolized by Leader, and questions related to the disposition or dispersal of Orwell's Big Brother. "Play" will discuss the expanded possibilities for individual free will, as well as for the narrative structure of *1Q84*, after the removal of Leader, as the symbol for any apprehended structural center, through Derrida's concept of *freeplay*.⁴

"Interludes" appear between each of the major sections as intrusions into the regular flow of the analysis, and offer brief digressions into the supporting philosophical apparatus based on Heidegger that will be used in the sections that follow.

"Inconclusive" will summarize the means by which Murakami's characters, as Heidegger's *dasein*, develop into fully *authentic dasein* through their own ontic writing, or fail to do so and thus become *inauthentic dasein*. I will also explore some questions and implications that gesture toward the application of ontic writing for various conceptual configurations of *dasein*, such as cultures and nations.

The Coda will return us to our starting point with a little hummable literary tune, useful for telling others what this thesis was all about.

⁴ I will use *freeplay* as one word following Derrida's specific use and presentation in "Structure, Sign and Play." Freeplay as used by Derrida is closely related to the exercise of *free will*, thus presenting these terms similarly seems to keep that association in mind.

PRELUDE

*It's a Barnum and Bailey World,
just as phony as it can be,
but it wouldn't be make believe,
if you believed in me.*⁵

On the eve of the Japanese release of Books 1 and 2 of *1Q84* (May 29, 2009), a behemoth of a novel with a title that deliberately invokes Orwell's masterpiece, Haruki Murakami sat with Hideo Furukawa for an interview that would appear the next week in *Monkey Business*, a well-reputed Japanese magazine devoted to avant-garde literature. Murakami said, "To put it bluntly, when you add fluff (superfluous), a novelist is worthless. That's what I think, how I really feel" ("Rutsubo" 450). The interview with Furukawa is itself is extensive (80 pages in print), and with *1Q84* weighing in at 925 pages in English (1600 pages in the three volumes of the Japanese edition), it seems that it may be full of fluff. Further on in the *Monkey Business* interview, Murakami does give some authorial perspective of the novel about to be released:

...[on] the one hand you have this uncontainable chaotic situation, and at the same time, there's this global view that becomes the backbone. So I'm thinking of this *comprehensive novel* that assembles these various conflicting factors. That's why, I'm going to be sixty soon, and though I'm not at the level of Dostoevsky, I want to, eventually, be able to create such a comprehensive novel. ("Rutsubo" 502 my emphasis)

Comprehensive it is, as *1Q84* seems to take on almost everything, and thus deciphering

⁵ This is the unattributed epigraph to *1Q84*. The lyrics to *Paper Moon* were written by Billy Rose and E.Y. "Yip" Harburg in 1933.

what one thinks it may be about could lead one to think that there is no *there*, there.⁶

Whether Murakami believes *1Q84* to be that comprehensive novel that puts him at the level of Dostoevsky or not, he has clearly stated his ambitions. Setting its opening at the critical years between the two World Wars in the first half of the twentieth century does seem to give it a global view. While *1Q84* does take on some heavy themes with conflicting factors, there are a number of jarring metaphors and situations that hit the reader without the sort of careful preparation and follow through that are characteristic of Dostoevsky, Chekov, or any number of literary masters called into service in the pages of *1Q84*. Murakami scholar Matthew Stretcher observes:

Murakami's works give one the impression of a serious artist who expresses himself in a distinctly un-serious manner. That is to say, he writes imaginative, often unrealistic texts, but typically with a sturdy message attached, in the tones of an elder brother pointing out the pitfalls of life to his reader. (Stretcher 355)

Stretcher's impression of Murakami's works suggest that there is a sturdy message somewhere embedded in the comprehensive novel, and *The New York Times*' Kathryn Schulz felt an impulse toward something lurking under the surface story of *1Q84*:

For most writers, analogies are a surface feature, a kind of literary accessory. For Murakami, they're an organizing principle. His stories are an extended exercise in X-is-to-Y: "This world is to our world as. . . ." For that reason, they often seem like allegories, but Murakami is after something more complex than a one-to-one symbolic substitution. (Schulz 2)

Even with Schulz' awareness that Murakami does not deploy simplistic one-to-one symbolic substitutions, she stops short of claiming to know what it is addressing: "So what problem is Murakami transposing in this new novel? I regret to report that I have no idea" (Schulz 2). There are many reasons why Schulz may have difficulty identifying "the problem" addressed by *1Q84*. The first could be that Murakami's imaginative texts

⁶ Appropriating Gertrude Stein's "There is no there, there," (Stein 289).

can seem utterly detached from whatever message may be associated through its metaphors. Or, could it simply be that Murakami is trying to transpose too many problems at once, or no specific problem at all? It may also be that Murakami's chaotic situations and conflicting factors construct possibilities for interpretation, without actually transposing any specific problem toward any specific end or message.

If we follow the invitation of the title, *1Q84*, to find connections with Orwell's *1984*, we might expect to find a totalitarian threat looming, and an omnipresent hierarchy undermining all attempts at individuality. But writing in 2008–2009, with the global superpowers that constitute the totalitarian states projected by *1984* now diffused, dictators deposed, and the global threat having become an amorphous conglomeration of terrorist cells scattered across the globe, Murakami's invocation of Orwell seems to be anachronistic.

Let me therefore take up Schulz' question of what *1Q84* is transposing by suspending our urge to make direct links and instead shifting our narrative parallax to a broader horizon so we can begin to see the narrative of *1Q84* as a *gestalt* that is being painted beyond the surface narrative, even if somewhat vaguely. A *gestalt*, understood here as the visual image used in Rorschach personality tests and visual parlor tricks, requires a soft focus and an act of more or less subjective interpretation to claim what an image might represent or signify. Indeed, *gestalt* is often used not to suggest a meaning, but to elicit a meaning from the perceiver. Thus, any meaning of a *gestalt* is provisional, dependent upon the context in which it is viewed and the hermeneutic apparatus that the perceiver brings to the apprehension of the image. Multistable *gestalts* are those in which two different perceptions can be made of the same image. Perhaps the most widely

known is that in which the viewer perceives both an old woman and a young woman in the same image, but never at the same time.

However, the *Paper Moon* epigraph to *IQ84* (and this section) instructs us to assume that everything is fake, superficial, or paper thin, and that we are not to be fooled by such veiled appearances. Note that the songs lyrics do not suggest that the phoniness of the world is at all untrue or unreal—or true or real, for that matter. Rather, the lyrics assert that the simple act of deliberately choosing to believe (in me) is what makes the world no longer (appear to be) phony. What occurs in the deliberate act of apprehending a thing to be a thing is, therefore, not to be understood as self-deception, but self-constitution. That places the focus on how the individual chooses to interact with the world—as real or phony—by the deliberate act of choosing an interpretation of the world.

I will follow the suggestion of the *Paper Moon* epigraph and take as my organizing principle the idea that the deliberate act of choosing an interpretation makes the world real. Posed in this way, *IQ84* would be as real as the reader believes it to be, or just as phony. Such a provisional approach makes *IQ84* not a novel bearing a specific message, but a diegetic world bearing questions, a *gestalt* of words that awaits interpretation. Continuing with the construction of questions, we might follow the “Q” of the title linking with Orwell to make the problem that Murakami is transposing be the same problem that vexed Orwell’s Winston Smith, who finds himself trapped in a world of constantly shifting interpretations, causing him to question everything about himself, including the place and year in which he lived.

“Q is for ‘question mark’”

Let me begin the task of transposition I have set for myself, then, with the title. According to Aomame, one of the protagonist dyad, “Q is for ‘question mark.’ A world that bears a question” (*IQ84* 110). In Japanese, “Q” and “9” are homonyms, thus the utterance, “*ichi-kew-hachi-yon*,” could refer to either or both Orwell’s *1984* and Murakami’s *IQ84*. Thus, with remarkable efficiency, a single character difference in the title carries out the weighty task of orienting the reader toward the Derridean shifts that the reader can expect inside *IQ84*. Deliberately taking the “Q” as the problem posed by Derrida’s *différance*, which implicitly gives authority to the written form of an utterance merely by its persistence, suggests that without writing, the “Q” contests the authenticity of the work within before it is even read, because the titles of Orwell’s and Murakami’s works are indistinguishable from each other when spoken.

Building on the implications of Murakami’s derivative title and the stated problems of transposition, I assert that *IQ84* is simply motivated by the concept of “questions,” rather than specific questions or conclusive messages that are transposed from one context to another. Therefore, the question to consider within *IQ84* is one of authenticity, what constitutes authenticity and how it may be realized. Authenticity is presented here as a struggle between fate and free will, where the inertia of culture impresses itself upon individuals with an overwhelming force, in the way that cultural force of *1984* presses its own will upon interpretations of *IQ84*.

Orienting my questioning with allusions from the novel’s first page, I see a question arising about the origins of fascist movements around the globe, especially in Germany and Japan. One question might be as anachronistic as *IQ84* itself, by asking not

the sequential question, “what happened to Orwell’s Big Brother” but rather, “can I use anything in Murakami’s ‘comprehensive novel’ to help me understand where Big Brother might have come from?” Or, better yet, letting questions inspire other questions, I will focus my inquiry deeper within *1Q84*, and simultaneously within *1984*, to the act of writing that seems to propel both narratives. So, beginning from a background forming question, “what effect did writing have on Orwell’s Winston Smith,” I will develop a primary analytic approach for looking at questions posed in *1Q84*, to ask, “what effect did writing *Air Chrysalis* have on Fuka-Eri?” This secondary question may help me address my primary question, and in turn may land me back at Schulz’s earlier puzzlement about the problem *1Q84* may be attempting to transpose.

“Don’t Let Appearances Fool You”

Murakami alerts the reader, almost as a warning, not to take the surface story of this text as its primary, or only message, through the title of the first chapter of *1Q84*, “Don’t Let Appearances Fool You.” While *1Q84* takes place in an outwardly very recognizably modern Tokyo, it is purported to be an alternate world with two moons and some changed facts. From the ever-important context of the first page, Murakami begins listing global historical references: from Janáček’s *Sinfonietta*, Pilsner beer, the First World War and the rise of Hitler, the fall of the Habsburg Dynasty, and Kafka’s death as well as the death of Japan’s Taishō Emperor. The setting established on the first page from the many global references from the interwar period may leave the reader to question whether the novel has much to do about Japan, and whether its author can be

considered *authentically*⁷ Japanese. These are a regular criticism of much of Murakami's writing, in that while the physical location of the story is over determined as taking place in Japan, the writing style and themes are hardly restricted to Japan or Japanese culture. Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Ōe, whose works often deal with the social and psychological aftermath of World War II and the atomic bombs, had the following to say about Murakami's writing style in a 1991 conversation with acclaimed Japanese-born British novelist, Kazuo Ishiguro :

Murakami Haruki writes in Japanese, but his writing is not really Japanese. If you translate it into American English, it can be read very naturally in New York. I suspect that this sort of style is not really Japanese literature, nor is it really English literature. (Ishiguro and Ōe 118)

Ōe and Ishiguro already exhibit an assumed definition of what *authentic* Japanese or English literature is to be, which is challenged by Murakami's style, though Murakami is not alone in this challenge to *authentic* literature defined by common national or language boundaries.⁸

Murakami's leveraging of extra-textual perception to provide specific meaning is well practiced in his previous novels, but reaches new heights in *1Q84*, with an over abundance of cultural allusions culled from many of the major economies around the world. We might infer from these observations that the same sort of global, totalizing concerns that haunted Orwell will also haunt Murakami's *1Q84*, though transposed to the present context of the beginning of the twenty-first century, characterized by the Internet, global terrorism, and interdependent world economies.

⁷ Authentic used here (and whenever italicized below) in the vernacular sense, as "archaeological authenticity" not in the sense otherwise generally used in this thesis as "interpreted authenticity."

⁸ Curiously, while some authors, like Yoko Tawada (*The bridegroom was a dog*) are recognized in German studies as *both* 'Japanese' *and* 'German,' authors, Ōe and Ishiguro have characterized Murakami as *neither* 'Japanese' *nor* 'English.'

The *gestalt* and the butterfly

Global totalizing hierarchies are indeed a major theme for *1Q84*, but where Orwell's text postulates the consequences of a totalizing socialist or communist world with IngSoc, and the ever-present but elusive Big Brother, Murakami's text focuses on the origin of totalizing structures. Although the authors use different narrative devices, both novels similarly pay particular attention to writing *as a totalizing force* and the resulting implications for authenticity, individuality, and power. Orwell's Winston Smith is employed as a rewriter of the past at Minitrue, which serves to prop up the IngSoc hierarchy, but then becomes a journal writer in an attempt to stabilize history for himself. Similarly, Murakami's Tengo Kawana is hired by editor Komatsu to "screw the literary world" (*1Q84* 25), by rewriting a story that was originally authored by a young, dyslexic girl, Fuka-Eri, with the help of her friend, to orient herself in her isolated world.

1Q84 is involved in its own world in a similar manner that the embedded story *Air Chrysalis* is involved in world of *1Q84*, a point that has not gone unnoticed by reviewers. *The New York Times*' Kathryn Schulz concludes her review by letting *1Q84* critique itself through the character Komatsu's description of *Air Chrysalis*:

In the end, Tengo puts it best. "You could pick it apart completely if you wanted to," he acknowledges. And yet, "after you work your way through the thing, with all its faults, it leaves a real impression—it *gets* to you." He's describing 'Air Chrysalis,' but the same could be said of this book. (Schulz 3)

Similarly, Charles Baxter, of the *New York Review of Books*, takes this approach of appropriating the text to critique itself a bit further, quoting even more of the same passage:

Early in Haruki Murakami's new novel, a character describes to an editor at a Japanese publishing house a manuscript of a novel that has come to his attention, and what he says sounds like a preview of the book we are about to read:

You could pick it apart completely if you wanted to. But the story itself has real power: it draws you in. The overall plot is a fantasy, but the descriptive detail is incredibly real. The balance between the two is excellent. I don't know if words like "originality" or "inevitability" fit here, and I suppose I might agree if someone insisted it's not at that level, but finally, after you work your way through the thing, with all its faults, it leaves a real impression—it *gets* to you in some strange, inexplicable way that may be a little disturbing.

[...] Murakami, who is nothing if not ambitious, has created a kind of alternative world, a mirror of ours, reversed. (Baxter 1)

I am fascinated by the way these reviewers use a work of literature's own critique of its embedded literary works to critique itself, as if the work is already mirroring itself in the "real world" before it even emerges in it. Somehow, there is a sense that the text of *1Q84* anticipates its own literariness, and seeks to organize and orient itself within literary worlds, using the reviewers as agents of its own becoming. Later on, Tengo reads critical reviews of the story he has rewritten:

As a story, the work is put together in an exceptionally interesting way and it carries the reader along to the very end, but when it comes to the question of what is an air chrysalis, or who are the Little People, we are left in a pool of mysterious question marks. This may well be the author's intention, but many readers are likely to take this lack of clarification as a sign of 'authorial laziness.' (*1Q84* 380).

The numerous apparent loose ends in *1Q84* invite interpretation, but at the same time, many apparently conflicting factors remain, and the frequency of confusing or disturbing allegories that jump at the reader do make reading *1Q84* feel like its own critics' response to *Air Chrysalis*. Together, as *gestalt*, these commentaries on literature through the commentary on *Air Chrysalis* can produce the image of Murakami as author ventriloquizing his intentions through the hero, as Bakhtin suggested was the case with Pushkin's *Onegin*.

Returning to the paragraph of *1Q84* cited by Baxter to pick it apart, line by line,

discloses most of the themes toward which I have been working. First, it highlights both a fantasy plot, and its incredibly realistic descriptive detail. For *IQ84* itself, the seemingly excruciating descriptive detail of mundane experiences—cooking, driving, sex, and so forth—are given in hyper-real detail, obscuring a fantastical plot. There is, nevertheless, a balance between this surface plot and its underlying structure, which echoes the way the dowager’s butterfly has evolved in exquisitely tuned balance with a specific place in its environment. Next, the themes of “originality” and “inevitability” are noted, which are nothing less than “individuality” vs. “homogeneity” or “free will” vs. “fate,” the very subjects alluded to on the first page. Individual authenticity⁹ is particularly interesting, as it is the subject of Janáček’s *Symphonietta*, much of Kafka’s works exploring multiple estrangements, and the questions posed to the world at large by the rise of fascism. Individuality being within culture is also the subject of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* that emerged during the interwar period, and was even appropriated by the Nazi government as a philosophical justification for its fascist ideology.

Next, Komatsu critiques the literariness of *Air Chrysalis* by acknowledging that “it may not be at that level” of possessing originality or inevitability; which is to say that this seemingly pedestrian work offers an unsatisfactory gesture toward the weighty questions and qualities that high literature seems to possess. Given that Komatsu, within *IQ84*, makes this assertion, and that our reviewers have taken this as a critique of *IQ84*, it is tempting to think that Murakami is giving talking points to the reviewers of *IQ84* through Komatsu.

Finally, Komatsu suggests that the reader must “work your way through the

⁹ Used here in the Heideggerian sense described above.

thing,” resulting in an *impression* that “gets to you,” like a *gestalt*, rather than a clear one-to-one mapping of meanings. A *gestalt* cannot be comprehended by focusing on any given spot, nor is any meaning revealed in pieces taken out of context. Only when a *gestalt* is apprehended as a whole can any image or meaning be perceived, however vaguely. That is to say that any number of isolated sections, passages, or lines may be incomprehensible out of context, or even lead to interpretations that are completely contradictory to the interpretation of the work as a whole. That is probably true of any work of literature, and certainly true of *IQ84*.

INTERLUDE I

Orwell's dialectic vs. Murakami's dialogic

Martin Heidegger's magnum opus, *Being and Time*, takes up the question of "what it means to be" for an individual in society after the philosophy of the modern, mechanized world stripped away the authority of a transcendental Grand Narrative, leaving Nietzsche's "Eternal Return." Put in simplistic terms, Heidegger's premise is that *authentic being* is actually a rather banal affair. *Authentic being* is discovered as one makes increasingly deliberate actions to navigate the physical and social context in which one finds oneself—even if those actions result in predictably mundane repetitions, like those we see in *1Q84*. Heidegger's term *dasein* refers to one who acts with individually motivated deliberateness having successfully interpreted one's context (*history as it has been handed down*) and accepted one's existential finitude (*being-toward-death*). The ultimate uniqueness or originality of the individual's deliberateness is less significant than merely acting deliberately. Following Nietzsche, Heidegger asserts the overwhelming sameness and repetition of individual lives, and also articulates a qualitative difference in deliberately choosing to accept a given proposition, rather than merely conforming habitually. The early interest by members of the Nazi leadership in Heidegger's work as a philosophical justification for fascist policies concerned itself only with the first half of his project and appeared only to be focused on the overwhelming, repetitious forces seemingly projected by *history as it has been handed down* as a logic to

enforce social conformity and homogeneity. The approach either fails to grasp or deliberately avoids the more subtle part of Heidegger's project that described the role that the individual (*dasein* as text) plays in altering the same (culture or history *as-it-has-been handed-down* as *dasein*'s context). Only much later, when it became politically safe to revisit *Being and Time*, would scholars such as George Steiner be free to discuss Heidegger's thinking, especially the dialogic nature of culture and the individual which would accommodate, even demand, an inflection of the historical context as it was received and handed down in turn. This would amount to a forward looking reproach of traditional Western historical philosophical methods, which "must be overthrown, and with *Sein und Zeit*, this revolutionary process, announced but not carried out by Nietzsche, is initiated" (Steiner 30). In his introduction, Steiner's notes that until Nietzsche, and later Heidegger, Western historical philosophical inquiry was mired in the limited possibilities available with the Hegelian dialectic mode, in which:

...inward circling paths of thinking, is sterile. We must, therefore, attempt a different sort of discourse, a different sort of asking. The crucial motion turns on the meaning of *Ent-sprechen*. An *Ent-sprechen* is not 'an answer to' (*une response à*), but a 'response to' a 'correspondence with,' a dynamic reciprocity and matching such as occur when gears, both in quick motion, mesh. (Steiner 29)

Steiner also notes that Hegelian methods that "answer to" preexisting propositions ultimately reify a binary system centered around a singular question which reproduces only inversions on the same theme, simply negotiating a middle ground between a thesis and antithesis. In simpler words, Hegelian dialectic does not lend itself to an examination of the question, or the central concept itself. Heidegger envisioned a much more fecund approach that would reframe the question and thereby take the dialog in entirely new directions.

Steiner makes three critical observations: First, that the sterility of traditional philosophical inquiry, including Hegelian dialectic, remains constrained by a-priori questions; second, that unrestrained questioning or inquiry is a “correspondence with” that presents a framework for a reciprocal dialog on equal terms, without a presupposition of an already existing authority or hierarchy implied by “responding to”; and finally, that he closes with a metaphor of gears already in independent motion (i.e., not responding to a prior force of the other gear) which come together and mesh as modes of inquiry that have independent origins and inertia of their own. Nothing is unitary or stable in Steiner’s characterization of Heidegger, not even the central question itself.

All three of Steiner’s observations bear on *IQ84* and its dialog with *1984*, which is more complex than simply “responding to” Orwell’s plot with an updated set of totalitarian fears. Without a central question to dominate the correspondence with Orwell, such as, “Whither Big Brother?” we are invited to ask entirely new questions, beginning with, “what exactly is the question?” Ominous totalitarian hierarchies dominate the previous works in the dystopian genealogical tradition—*The Iron Heel* (Jack London, 1908), *The Sleeper Wakes* (H.G. Wells, 1910) *We* (Yevgeny Zamyatin, 1921), *Brave New World*, (Aldous Huxley, 1931), and *1984* (Orson Wells, 1948). However, locating the source of totalizing power in *IQ84* is almost another of Murakami’s wild sheep chases.¹⁰ Professor Ebisuno, a cultural anthropologist and friend of Fuka-Eri’s father, understands this difficulty:

“George Orwell introduced the dictator Big Brother in his novel 1984, as I’m sure you know. The book was an allegorical treatment of Stalinism, of course. And

¹⁰ *Wild Sheep Chase* (羊をめぐる冒険, *Hitsuji o Meguru Bōken*, Trans. Jay Rubin) was Murakami’s breakout “runaway hit” in Japan published in 1982 as the third of loosely connected “Rat Trilogy,” Following his first moderately successful, *Hear the Wind Sing* (1979) and *Pinball 1973* (1980).

ever since then, the term ‘Big Brother’ has functioned as a social icon. That was Orwell’s great accomplishment. But now, in the real year 1984, Big Brother is all too famous, and all too obvious. If Big Brother were to appear before us now, we’d point to him and say, ‘Watch out! He’s Big Brother!’ There’s no longer any place for a Big Brother in this real world of ours. Instead, these so-called Little People have come on the scene. Interesting verbal contrast, don’t you think?” (*IQ84* 236)

It would be mistake, however, to take the above as a simple one-to-one mapping, declaring that Big Brother has simply become the Little People. Murakami translator, Jay Rubin, explains, “Murakami will never tell anyone the ‘meaning’ of the symbols in his works. In fact, he usually denies they are symbols at all” (Rubin 135). Withholding the meaning of symbols need not be taken as some game of cat and mouse with the enigmatic author attempting to encode a message so completely as to tempt scholars for generations.¹¹ The veiled, elusive, and even ambivalent attention to the Little People attenuates the symbol through the mode of its delivery, strengthening the invitation to the reader to interpret, and yielding authority of that interpretation. Professor Ebisuno continues:

“The Little People are an invisible presence. We can’t even tell whether they are good or evil, or whether they have any substance or not. But they seem to be steadily undermining us.” The Professor paused, then continued on. “It may be that if we are ever to learn what happened to Fukada and his wife or what happened to Eri, we will first have to find out what the Little People are.” (*IQ84* 236)

Ebisuno is sympathetic to Fukada, Fuka-Eri’s father who has become the Leader of the Sakigake cult. His statement notes clearly that something *happened* to both Fukada, his

¹¹ About translating James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Richard Ellman writes: “To translate *Penelope* exactly, Benoît-Méchin wished to see the scheme for the book. Joyce gave him only bits of it, and protested humorously, ‘If I gave it all up immediately, I’d lose my immortality. I’ve put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that’s the only way of insuring one’s immortality’” (Ellmann 521).

wife, and Fuka-Eri, and that it is related to the apparent power held by the Little People, though *IQ84* never gives the answer to the question “who are the Little People?”

CONTEXT

*A simple phrase takes its meaning from a given context,
and already makes its appeal to another one in which it will be understood;
but of course, to be understood
it has to transform the context in which it is inscribed.¹²*

An Orwellian heritage

By opening *1Q84* with the events of the period between the two World Wars of the twentieth Century, especially the year 1926, Murakami positions the origins of *1Q84* between Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, (1931), both predecessors of George Orwell's *1984* (1948). Exactly between the publication of these two warnings of fascism and hedonism comes Leoš Janáček's 1926 *Sinfonietta*, commissioned as a fanfare for a military festival celebrating the anniversary of the young Czech Republic's independence from the Habsburg Empire (1526-1918).

Coincidentally, in 1926, Martin Heidegger also finished writing his seminal work, *Being and Time*, in which he expounds on the idea of an individual emerging from their benighted ignorance into the awareness of their own being in a specific place and time, which he termed *dasein* (the 'being there' person). Heidegger's *dasein* is dependent upon two things: limited temporality, delimited by one's awareness of one's own past (as heritage) and future (as inevitable death); and being situated within a specific locality, or spatial and social context. As a metaphor, the dowager's butterfly serves well to describe

¹² From Derrida's "A Taste for the Secret" (19).

Heidegger's *dasein*: It is both limited temporally by its birth as an adult (awareness) after emerging from its chrysalis, and is destined to spend the remainder of its short life searching for a mate; all the while it is confined to its very specific environment, signified by a specific flower. Murakami's use of this metaphor early in the book alerts us to the interdependency of the text (a butterfly) and its context (the flower), which in turn is dependent upon its own context (the hothouse environment), which the dowager has recreated in Tokyo. In a similar fashion, I have tried above to recognize *1Q84* as a text in a context as it is received by the literary critics and reviewers.

Reaching back to 1926 on the first page, Murakami has positioned the context of *1Q84* before *1984*, at the very rise of these national and global totalitarian regimes. The threat of one-sided, stratified fascism that occurred in the early twentieth century has been told in fantastic clarity by the many dystopian texts that were written during that period. Orwell's own concern reflects the resonant suffering and anxiety at the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War, when the rise of the Soviet Union and Communist China sounded the alarm of the depersonalizing potential of communism and socialism. However, given the similar nature of their respective times, each of these dystopian works tells a similar story of totalitarian fears, with the partial exception of *Brave New World*.

This is not to disparage these iconic works in the slightest. Quite to the contrary, it is the very halfness of their stories which makes each of them succeed as the dystopian masterpieces that they are, and that makes them all conclude with either fascist or indulgent fears—they succeed by exploiting the one-sided nature of fascist hierarchies or de-individualizing nature of socialism, portraying a society that is extremely unbalanced.

In each novel, the prose and structure are supportive of the narrative message. *We* is told from the singular, frantic point of view of engineer D-503 who is wrapped up in building a great spaceship, the Integral, for One State. Individuality has been erased so completely that people have no unique identity, but are merely numbers within a class, living in glass houses under the watchful eye of the Benefactor. *Brave New World*, told through a detached, omniscient third-person narrative, instead addresses the dual threats of scientific manipulation of the human and the hedonistic tendency in human nature. It presents a system of fascist domination that utilizes these tools under the power of the World Controllers. Orwell's *1984* has the fascist state IngSoc actively rewriting history and pitting citizens against each other, all under the shadow of the reclusive Big Brother. Each of these monumental allegories asks a similar question and offers a similar observation, the effect of the dehumanizing excesses caused by authoritarian societies.

1Q84 stands in contrast to the principled tales that precede it, and their unambiguous identification of the source of evil in fascism controlled by an all-powerful figurehead. Schulz, who credited Murakami for avoiding simplistic one-to-one mappings and for using analogies as an organizing principle, goes on to castigate the *1Q84* for its apparent moral ambiguity: "I'm no fan of moral absolutism, but I'm troubled by Murakami's willingness to use the rape of children as mere metaphor, and by the general ethical impassivity pervading this book" (Schulz 3). Not only is this uncomfortable topic more than "mere metaphor," I will argue in the center of my thesis that this is perhaps the most important "organizing principle" of the novel, with implications for our own "real world."

The novel is organized around the banal love story of the protagonist dyad who

are destined to reunite by some act of will. Their parallel narratives are the mere metaphor of the surface story, while the obscured story of Fuka-Eri and her struggles to negotiate her own authentic selfhood from the isolation of her father's incestuous cult lies at the epicenter of the novel. I will read Fuka-Eri's suffering as the victim of rape and incest as a poignant, though poorly executed, allegory of Japan's own fascist past, an inward isolation that deprived future generations of their own individual freedoms and vitality, and all too often, similar physical abuse.

At the literal and literary epicenter of *IQ84*,¹³ Aomame confronts Leader on the rape of his daughter just before he voluntarily submits to her ice pick to "remove him from this world" (*IQ84* 468). The four chapters surrounding this point are the crux of the entire work as I have construed it. I believe that failure to carefully address this most uncomfortable subject identified by Schulz would certainly leave one perplexed regarding its function in the text. I will also agree that Murakami's light handling of the subject is not only troubling, but undermines the function it seems to serve. Leader begins a lengthy philosophical digression at this mid-point in the novel with a claim that his relations with the girls in the cult, including his daughter, are entirely metaphysical and goes on with discussions of parallel worlds, Little People, Perceivers and Receivers, *Mazah* and *Dohta* and more. I will address these in some detail in the sections titled "Interlude III" and "Sign."

In an attempt to understand Schulz' observation of the "ethical passivity pervading this book," let me make an appeal to authorial intention. Japanese literary critic, Testuro Koyama, had a conversation with Murakami about the question of "Evil"

¹³ Chapter 12 of Book 2 begins on page 462, exactly one half of the 925 pages in English, and in Japanese on page 251 of the 500 pages of Book 2.

in 2009, as the author was finishing the first two books of *IQ84*. Koyama quotes

Murakami:

“Nowadays, we’re in an era when we don’t really know what is unmistakably evil.” ...In other words, portraying evil today, Murakami says, “the protagonist may be good, but at the same time may be evil, necessitating a complex sort of person. Like the game *Othello*, being in a chaotic, complex world where a change to one piece causes the whole thing to reverse itself.” (Koyama 162)

Whereas the alignment of good and evil were believed to be more stable and distinct in the Orwellian literary heritage, Murakami sees it as more fungible in the early twentieth century. Absolute positions of good and evil are no longer fixed or absolute. The fungibility of good and evil may be the moral relativism that troubles Schulz. Fungibility need not automatically imply ethical impassivity, but offer a rather more complex questioning of where ethical differentiation arises, and from what perspective. Charles Baxter’s critique, in the article titled, “Behind Murakami’s Mirror,” makes similar observations to Schulz, but includes what may be a useful way to interpret some of these problems: “If my summary seems to suggest that some elements in *IQ84* are trashy, so be it. Murakami is a great democrat when it comes to subject matter and plot development.” (Baxter 2) Perhaps Baxter’s use of the term, “democrat” for Murakami’s style in *IQ84* can be seen as the messy argument among individuals, cultural groups, political parties, and even nations. Each claims a moral certainty for their own positions, each backing up their arguments with their own interpretations of the past as narratives archeological truth, yet these are inevitably derived from a subjective sense of good and evil.

Murakami is writing *IQ84* in 2007–2009, looking back on two versions, two interpretations of history, Orwell’s *1984* and the year 1984, when Ronald Reagan was reelected by the largest margin in US history and faced off with Michael Gorbachov.

Reagan and Gorbachov together represent the unassailable leadership of the world's superpowers, and together usher in the fall of the world binary of the Soviet Union and United States. The populace of both nations claims that their leader was the visionary who initiate the end of the Cold War. Yet as with the two moons in *1Q84*, questions arise about what is real and what is merely perceived, "are we gazing at the truth, or its reflection as we perceive it in our own warped funhouse moral mirror?" Uncomfortable reflections may even appear as we gaze deeper into our own moral mirror. We may find that most good and evil potentials come from a single source deep within ourselves, even simultaneously, as we compare each and determine for ourselves which is the good and which is the evil. The question symbolized by the two moons offers a choice: which moon, which interpretation of history, will be the one to believe, and thus, to make real?

Orwell's *play-giarisms*

Whereas previous dystopian novels in this lineage are all told from a single privileged point of view, *1Q84* begins with two, and eventually three, privileged points of view. This formal treatment has, at a higher level of abstraction, nearly as much to say about the narrative as the narrative itself. Murakami avoids a single point of view in the narrative structure, and in the process, attempts to write both parts of a question, the cause and effect together, much like the butterfly and the flower.

The union of the banal and the profound is another such co-arising binary that is discussed very early in *1Q84*. Consider this passage from the second chapter, "Some Changed Facts," the first of the "Tengo" chapters, in which the editor Komatsu attempts to persuade Tengo to rewrite the story "Air Chrysalis" written by the 17 year-old girl, Fuka-Eri: "We put two authors together and invent a brand-new one. We add your perfect

style to Fuka-Eri's raw story. It's an ideal combination.... With the two of you together, the new writer's prize will be easy, and then we can shoot for the Akutagawa" (*IQ84* 24). Compare Komatsu's statement within *IQ84* to Orwell's critique of London's *The Iron Heel*, as "clumsily written" and "hugely inferior" to the literary artistry in Wells' *The Sleeper Wakes*. Orwell does acknowledge, however clumsily written, that "London could grasp something that apparently Wells could not" (*Prophecies*, 30). Orwell respects the raw insight into the savagery of London's work, over the literary artistry of H.G. Wells. We see the same pattern in Orwell's review of Zamyatin's *We*.

So far as I can judge it is not a book of the first order, but it is certainly an unusual one, and it is astonishing that no English publisher has been enterprising enough to reissue it. The first thing anyone would notice about *We* is the fact--never pointed out, I believe--that Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* must be partly derived from it. ("Review" 72).

Whatever connection Orwell sees between *Brave New World* and its predecessor *We*, the parallels between *We* and *1984* are ever more striking. If Huxley at least partly derived his tale from Zamyatin, then Orwell's own masterpiece, by comparison, is merely a purloined plot from Zamyatin's raw, but "unusual," novel and wordsmithed by the verbal artist Orwell.

Orwell certainly engaged in what is hard to dismiss as just that sort of plot pinching from Zamyatin's *We*. He had previously worked as a staff editor for the UK's *Tribune*, where he wrote dozens of articles commenting on the war, and on the role that writing plays in forming public opinion. Orwell wrote a favorable article introducing Zamyatin's *We*, and went on to offer a comparison to Huxley's *Brave New World*, finding the latter lacking. Orwell almost dismisses Huxley's work:

So far the resemblance with *Brave New World* is striking. But though Zamyatin's book is less well put together--it has a rather weak and episodic plot which is too

complex to summarise--it has a political point which the other lacks.
 ("Review" 72)

Orwell clearly shows preference for *We* as a prior work of art, so much so that he himself goes on to pilfer its plot—*play*-gerizing Zamyatin even as he criticizes Huxley for doing the same. Orwell's own assessment of *We* in turn bears its own "striking resemblance" to the editor Komatsu's opinion of *Air Chrysalis* in *IQ84* already mentioned, a critique which both Schulz and Baxter pick up and turned around to apply to *IQ84* itself.

Orwell's *1984* is clearly informed by his own work as a journalist and literary critic in the decade before its release, during which he was nearly consumed by his obsession with totalitarianism. Orwell's 1940 essay, "Prophecies of Fascism," compares totalitarian tales listed above and includes Ernest Bramah's *The Secret of the League* (1907). Orwell certainly did his homework, yet for all of his obsession with the overt, centralized, hierarchies, he leaves out Huxley's *Brave New World* in "Prophecies of Fascism." All of these tales present societies that have ordered themselves into fully oppressive structures, but *Brave New World* pays scant attention to the World Controllers, immersing itself instead in the strata of the engineered society.

It seems that Orwell is interested in identifying an obvious, singular political point, a recognizable Big Brother, a one-to-one mapping or substitution of metaphors, an antithesis set in obvious opposition to an already established thesis. Orwell is as bewildered as Schulz: "At the same time no clear reason is given why society should be stratified in the elaborate way it is described" ("Review" 72). Orwell is unable to recognize Huxley's complete transposition of *We*, which went so far as to apparently remove the single political point, that of the central oppressive hierarchy, dispersing the motive for social stratification throughout the social matrix itself. For Orwell, it seems,

the very idea that only a centralized, oppressive force can produce social stratification and governmental order, and that the apparent structure of society must imply an organizing principle, a hierarchy, an oppressor. Derrida would readily recognize Huxley's move as a near deconstruction of the center. Similarly, Murakami will identify the organizing force that periodically reemerges as the vestigial power of the benighted Little People, driven by their primitive instincts for social coherence around any arbitrary singular point.

This discussion of Orwell's awareness of the totalitarian dystopias, and his borrowings from them, is presented to make the following two points: Firstly, I aim to show through the long history of early twentieth century totalitarian narratives, that the central thesis that governs each of them is never fully challenged. In a Hegelian mode of thesis-antithesis, all the resulting syntheses remain somewhat constrained by the guiding claim that began the series of literary works—the claim that a singular conspicuous oppressor organizes society for its own benefit. As such, the limits of the Hegelian mode are evident in that the outcomes are predictably similar to their predecessors. There are variations in style or different social contexts, but all address essentially the same claim about the centralized locus of power in society. Orwell's masterpiece bears telling similarities to all those that came before, with evidence that he was very aware of all of them, though the dispersed power to organize society in *Brave New World* escaped his attention.

The second, equally important point is that one could make the claim, as Orwell did of Huxley, that the earlier work, no matter how unrefined the prose, bears the undeniable claim to originality and authenticity. Orwell's *1984* appeared after no less

than six previous modern, totalitarian dystopias. Are we then to judge Orwell's masterpiece as being derivative of *We* and even less original than *Brave New World*? Is it a lesser work, inauthentic and unworthy of consideration as legitimate literature?

Certainly not. What becomes apparent in this Orwellian lineage exercise is that questions of authenticity are not bound by determination of originality in the sense that something must spring, fully-formed out of the head of the author.¹⁴ Instead, we can recognize the very inevitability that an author will, even must, appropriate fragments or wholesale arguments of prior works, placing value of authenticity not on the archaeological sense of the work (i.e., an original emerging *ex nihilo*), but in the act of authorship itself.

Authorship involves appropriation, adaptation, and presenting, as apposed to merely copying, cloning or replicating a pre-existing thing. Orwell's masterpiece is so masterful that his name has become the adjective describing the entire genre of twentieth-century totalitarian dystopias, although his was at least the sixth in the genealogy of the literary genre. Ironically, Orwell's character Winston Smith is employed as a rewriter of history, while Orwell himself, through Winston's story, rewrites the dystopias that came before.

Literary circles, writing, and rewriting

Putting aside for the moment the question of whether a derivative text can ever also be authentic, recall Komatsu's statement, "We add your perfect style to Fuka-Eri's raw story. It's an ideal combination..." (*IQ84* 24). Literature that combines perfect, cultured style and raw story—literature that emerges from a raw source (primitive, banal, or not of the first order), and is then cooked (made civilized and profound)—is

¹⁴ Images of Athena springing fully formed out of Zeus' head are welcome here, even encouraged.

recognized here as the ideal pairing. These structural alignments are also organizing principles for Murakami. In this simple passage early in the book, we begin to see the emerging binaries of high and low, primitive and cultured, even raw and cooked. Before his last (successful) attempt to persuade Tengo to rewrite *Air Chrysalis*, Komatsu gives his own motives for this plan that will set the entire story of *1Q84* in motion:

I'd be doing it to screw the literary world. Those bastards all huddle together in their gloomy cave and kiss each other's asses, and lick each other's wounds, and trip each other up, all the while spewing this pompous crap about the mission of literature. I want to have a good laugh at their expense. I want to outwit the system and make idiots out of the bunch of them. (*1Q84* 25)

Note the contrast in the use of primitive metaphors with self-proclaimed culture in the above passage. Komatsu is pitting his wits against the literati as an institution and questions the boundaries that define literature and its hierarchies. His plan to make idiots out of the literati relies on baiting them with a piece of literature that is itself an amalgamation of the primitive and the cultured, the marriage of the cultured wordsmithing of Tengo Kawana (himself a great cook) with the raw story of Fuka-Eri. The overall image of this passage seems to characterize the literary world in such derogatory terms that Komatsu could just as well be describing primitive, clan-like infighting, even to the extent of suggesting that insularity has transformed the literati into weak-minded, in-bred idiots, easily outwitted by a more vigorous, vulgar outsider.

Again, in *Monkey Business*, Murakami himself had the following to say regarding the cool reception his early work received by the literary circles of Japan:

At that time, authors, critics and editors made up this sort of circle, it was an era when they almost worked (together) like a machine. So, it was a time when, if you didn't belong in some circle and hold a position somehow, well, I don't know how it is now, but there was a real sense of urgency, one couldn't help but feel isolated. I'm absolutely not anti-literati. I don't really like acquaintances like that, so I hadn't made any of those kinds of friends. So, at that time in the literary

world, it was like “if you’re not a friend, you’re an enemy.” So, for someone like me who was going along not looking for allies, it was a situation where the others around me could do nothing but see me as an enemy. So, I go ahead trying not to concern myself with it much, but there are times when it is bothersome. (“Rutsubo” 455)

Murakami may be referring to comments like those from Ōe and Ishiguro above. Two relevant things can be learned from this passage: First is that Murakami’s feeling seems to mirror Komatsu’s belief that writers, critics, and editors operate as a single, integrated machine (as in Zamyatin’s *We*) concerned with its own self-preservation. The intolerance for outsiders is not simply problematic for an author trying to break in to the literary circles, but it amounts to a type of proto-fascism, its mission to police the boundaries and tolerance of difference within literature. Recall George Steiner’s understanding of Heidegger’s challenge to traditional philosophy, where the “inward circling paths of thinking, is sterile.” (Steiner 29). Similarly, both Murakami and his character Komatsu are critical of the world of literature and its self-identified literati, as a social structure that is similarly insular and reductive, resulting in stunted growth of the cultural organism itself, ultimately becoming sterile.

Writing and repetition: transposing vs. questioning

Almost as if in dialog with the *The New York Times*’ Schulz, who punted on the attempt to identify the problem Murakami is trying to transpose in *IQ84*, Kevin Hartnett of Christian Science Monitor gives it a try. Hartnett quotes Murakami’s own character, Tengo, to level a critique on *IQ84*:

Tengo reflects on how as a child he used literature to escape, he may give the reader Murakami’s view of the purpose of fiction:

“The role of a story was, in the broadest terms, to transpose a problem into another form. Depending on the nature and the

direction of the problem, a solution might be suggested in the narrative. Tengo would return to the real world with that suggestion in hand. It was like a piece of paper bearing the indecipherable text of a magic spell.” [(1Q84 178)]

So what is the problem ‘1Q84’ seeks to transpose? It is loneliness, maybe—the loneliness Tengo and Aomame felt at the time a second moon appeared in the sky. The world of ‘1Q84’ feels cold and forbidding but at the same time it provides an opportunity their other lives did not: to find each other again. And as Aomame tells her friend Ayumi, ‘If you can love someone with your whole heart, even one person, then there’s salvation in life.’ (Hartnett 3)

Hartnett concludes his review with some reservation and a lingering uncertainty about his grasp of the story, saying, “There may not be salvation in reading ‘1Q84,’ but there is something quite powerful” (3). Hartnett’s effort to find something in the text is laudable in the face of Murakami’s daunting riddling, but his focus remains at the level of the “love conquers all” surface story, rather than probing what is being transposed from Orwell, and how such a transposition happens.

Let me revisit the common question posed by Schulz and Hartnett in a different manner, stepping back a bit to approach the question of transposition again with the softer focus required to perceive a *gestalt* rather than the particulars embedded within. Beginning with Orwell, we recognize that it is the repetition of writing and rewriting of history at Minitrue that agitates Winston Smith. He is unable to discover any archaeological authenticity, as history has been so obscured by the endless production of new histories to the point that he has become ontologically disoriented; he does not know whether the year really is 1984, or whether he is, in fact, in London. Below, I include a rather generous portion of this because it describes many of the critical themes of my own thesis. It also showcases Orwell’s artful prose, revealing the richness, the deeply personal, individual, visceral and tactile, almost sensual nature involved in the simple act

of writing. On page 10, Winston Smith first writes his own story:

The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least a forced-labor camp. Winston fitted a nib into the pen holder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speakwrite, which was of course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act. In small clumsy letters he wrote:

April 4th, 1984.

He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.

For whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary? For the future, for the unborn? For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless. (1984 10)

The moment Winston writes the date, he places himself in a very particular kind of quandary. He is attempting to stabilize not a record of the world as it was, but to stabilize himself in an uncertain, always changing world. Using pen and paper, rather than the speakwrite he uses as an editor at Minitrue to rewrite history, Winston subtly but unequivocally signifies to himself the more stable authority that writing has over speech. Thus, Winston seeks in writing the means to orient himself within the chaotic world, to situate himself temporally and spatially as a person *being-there* in his finite, now stabilized world of London in 1984. It seems significant that his first writing is the date, causing Winston to instantly feel the inertia of time and the limits of his own life in

comparison to the inexorable march of time and the incomprehensible magnitude of the world that envelops him at that moment and becomes real and overwhelming.

Note also that the act of writing causes Winston to recognize intuitively that he was writing to someone, who would read it in the future. Writing itself seems to imply an anticipation of an unknown future interlocutor who would eventually read his words, and thereby “read” him.¹⁵ In other words, writing yanks Winston out of his uniform, repetitive isolation, giving to him the concept of an interlocutor to be with in the present as he writes, while at the same time presents the possibility, though vaguely, that a future may exist in which an interlocutor will read his writing. The possibility of a future, as different from the present, invites open-ended questions about that future, including the possibility that he may find himself again in that future, though changed by virtue of having been the one who had written in the past.

Authenticity and ontological vertigo

The portrayal of dystopian worlds of *We*, *Brave New World* (*BNW*), and *1984* presents contexts that remain entirely resistant to influence by the characters. While the protagonists do gain awareness of their contexts and their situation in them, the context nevertheless marches on inexorably, unchanged by the independent actions of the characters. There is no dialog, only “correspondence” (as Steiner uses the term) between the characters and their contexts. *1984* portrays no lasting change to Winston Smith’s world as a result of his writing. Winston is reprogrammed, in Room 101, to conform to the binary logic of the text. Seeing the text as dystopian context, the characters are merely

¹⁵ I derived this understanding from the guiding logic of Jacques Derrida’s *The Postcard* (1980).

the inscriptions of the context, component parts of its own grammar expressing the context's ontological desire for signification *as gestalt* of dystopia.

The earlier discussion, of Murakami's attention to literary circles in his own interviews, draws out the correspondence between texts (the individual works) and their contexts (the literary circles or pre-existing dystopic traditions), providing examples of the force of writing to transform its own context. Each of the texts discussed emerges already in dialog with a world full of pre-established signification which the texts first adopt, and then adapt those significations to their own purposes, thereby altering the respective context into which they emerge.

The above examples of texts in dialog demonstrate writing to be essential for the dialog. It seems too obvious to even say that without writing, none of the dialog previously discussed could have occurred.¹⁶ The unrecorded spoken utterance is temporally bound and fixed only in memory. As memory is very susceptible to decay, the spoken utterance has limited, transient impact on its world. On the other hand, written communications¹⁷ are transmitted across space and into the future in a relatively more stable form, as written or recorded communication that is more resistant to decay, that produces a more lasting influence on its own world.¹⁸ Winston Smith's appeal to writing is to engage in a dialog that gives the impression of being more stable, and to produce interlocutors beyond his own isolation in the imagined future or other locations. However, Orwell also demonstrates the potential to un-fix even the written form in the

¹⁶ Although obvious, I did just 'say it' *in writing*.

¹⁷ Winston Smith's problem is magnified today by several orders of magnitude with the present state of digital information and archives.

¹⁸ This includes any artifact, in any medium more resilient to decay than memory, especially writing.

problem Winston Smith confronts as an editor at Minitrue, rewriting history to make it conform to the always shifting, preferred narrative of the day—as in literally, a single day. Orwell’s example illustrates in hyperbolic style that a context is never actually stable, even overnight, and in a denial of that instability, endless rewriting seeks to force the perceived past to conform to the expectation of stability in the present.

Murakami’s character Tengo discusses Winston Smith’s rewriting with Fuka-Eri, the “original”¹⁹ author of the work *Air Chrysalis*, which he has rewritten:

Tengo: I’m pretty sure his job is to rewrite words. Whenever a new history is written, the old histories all have to be thrown out. In the process, words are remade, and the meanings of current words are changed. What with history being rewritten so often, nobody knows what is true anymore. They lose track of who is an enemy and who is an ally. It’s that kind of story.

Fuka-Eri: They rewrite history.

Tengo: Robbing people of their actual history is the same as robbing them of part of themselves. It’s a crime. [...] Our memory is made up of our individual memories and our collective memories. The two are intimately linked. And our history is our collective memory. If our collective memory is taken from us—is rewritten—we lose the ability to sustain our true selves.

Fuka-Eri: You rewrite stuff. (*IQ84* 257 my formatting as dialog)

Like Orwell’s Winston Smith, Tengo is acutely aware that as much as writing seems to enable identity, rewriting poses a great risk to it. The dialog with Fuka-Eri defends the nature of writing in the same way Winston sought his own identity through writing, as the creator of histories, personal, cultural, and national. Writing is embroiled in both the making of identities, understood as history, and in robbing people of the same through rewriting. Yet Tengo does “rewrite stuff,” which brings questions relating to authenticity, objective history, reliable memory, and ultimately the sources of identity, to the forefront of *IQ84*. Rewriting transposes history into a palimpsest for the present, shoving the past

¹⁹ The term, “original” is already contested here.

away while keeping its effaced presence within reach, and without which the present could never exist as the present, being distinct from the past. In a manner similar to history as palimpsest, the two moons over Tokyo might symbolize the multiple questions available in the present reality, as in the *Paper Moon* lyrics that proclaim realities and meanings are made merely by choosing them or by belief or interpretation. Yet the act of choosing one “reality” simultaneously shoves other potential meanings away.

As in exhibited in Orwell’s *1984*, appropriation presents at once a sense of one’s place in the world, along with an anxiety about the world that was displaced (even dismembered) by the appropriation (due to its nature of appropriating fragments). Winston Smith experienced the profound anxiety of dismemberment in the present as the overwhelming disorientation even caused by the constantly shifting signs around which he oriented his identity. The loss of stable identity produces ontological vertigo (anxiety about the loss of identity), as falling into a deep vacuum that draws upon signification to replace what was lost, countered by frantic grasping to recover, reassemble, even *re-*remember the identity that is falling away in fragments with the shifting signs.

Nostalgia also produces ontological vertigo through the conflation of past as present by projecting of a future in that remembered past. For twenty years, Aomame and Tengo each have had recurring memories of the last time they saw each other, wordlessly holding hands in an empty elementary school room, and recurring memories of separation from parents at an early age. These recurring memories of a presence that had been lost in the past produces nostalgia, a draw toward the receding past for its promise of familiar, stable signs that would orient them in the present. Like Winston Smith who experienced ontological vertigo through constant rewriting, Aomame and Tengo

experience ontological vertigo through their recurring memories. Their identities are unmoored from the apparently stable signification of memory (even in writing) as if teetering at the precipice of a dark chasm, uncertain if one will fall backward into the abyss of the past, or step forward into the abyss of the future.

Aomame stabilizes her ontological vertigo by labeling her unknown world as “A world that bears a question.” A question mark, as a provisional signifier, defers signification while simultaneously gesturing toward the potential for signification. The question Aomame chooses to ponder for the majority of Murakami’s surface plot is whether Aomame’s recurring memories of Tengo are a sign of their fate to reunite, or is it the impetus for her independent drive toward Tengo through many smaller independent acts of free will?

The earlier discussion of correspondence versus dialog through appropriation also raises questions of authenticity (as archaeological or interpretive) with respect to the meaning of authenticity as it applies to individual personhood, or culture (such as Japan’s Ainu people) or nationhood. Can authenticity be located in a factual stable past able to be disclosed as if archaeologically, or is it created in a present event as the presencing of one’s individuality (in writing)? Tracing the links in Tengo’s dialog from identity (from “true selves”), we see that identity is dependent upon individual and collective memory, then history, then writing; the linkages positioning *authenticity* of identity as being dependent upon what is written. Winston Smith similarly experiences writing as the basis for *authentic* identity, as shown above.

If authenticity is dependent upon writing, then it is also dependent upon what is already written, which in turn obscures the past by transforming the present through

writing the past into the present. Past becomes palimpsest by one's own hand as it attempts to be in the world. Winston Smith and Murakami's characters are presented with a choice of Eternal Return or Eternal Progression, of a recurrence of the past unchanged, or writing that which is *re*-membered into the present, and in turn forces the present into the past only to be obscured again.

The above examples of textual dialog argue that an archaeological authenticity is structurally impossible because there is no actual access to the unaltered *original* state without interpretation. A very simple example would be Orwell's own appropriations that resulted in his text, *1984*, as a pivot around which we must interpret anything before it. It is impossible today to read Zamyatin's *We* as it was first received in 1921, with ignorance of all of history since then, including fascism and WWII, nuclear weapons and energy, Orwell's *1984*, the space race including landing humans on the moon, the internet, and so on. Mere awareness of any of this will force a reading of *We* that simply cannot be the same as reading it in 1921—only as quaint or representative (both interpretive modes), through memory or perhaps with nostalgia or some other interpretation of the past in which *We* emerged.

More closely associated with my project here is that archaeological authenticity fails to achieve the authenticity Heidegger describes as necessary for *dasein* to be itself authentically, because it denies the *dasein* the necessary act of appropriation which integrates *dasein* in its present world. Summarizing the above discussion shows that not only is archaeological authenticity itself impossible (as it is already embroiled in interpretation), it is antithetical to the being of *dasein*, whereas interpreted authenticity is constitutive of *dasein* in its awareness in its world. As with Orwell, I have demonstrated

this on a literary level in Murakami's dialog with the literati, in dialog with the reviewers of *1Q84* through the characters of *1Q84* and in dialog with the reviewers of *Air* *Chrysalis*. These examples demonstrate the logic of *dasein* avoiding the brush with tautological definition by its being constituted discursively, rather than repetitively. Both fate and free will also stake out discursive positions in dialog with *dasein*, portrayed in *1Q84* through the predictable, banal plot, as well as in the formal structures of the narrative.

INTERLUDE II

Heidegger's ontology, presented in *Being and Time*, posits authentic being as a temporally and spatially constrained negotiation between fate (as history or culture) and free will (as individuality or the will to act independently). Heidegger's idiomatic use of many terms, including several neologisms, can efficiently point to more complex meanings, but require some accommodation before they become comfortable. I aim to describe in these interludes, as briefly as possible, relevant Heideggerian terms as I have appropriated them for this thesis.

Coming to terms with Heidegger

Dasein and its wor(l)d(s)

*Dasein*²⁰ (lit. "there-being") refers simply to any being with a conscious, conceptual orientation toward its own existence, since *dasein* comes to recognize (as the perceiving subject) itself as itself (as the object perceived). It refers to a unitary being with two aspects, at least linguistically and psychologically, possessing an awareness of itself as object, (i.e., "me/myself") and of itself as that being which (subject, i.e., "I") with the associated symbolic apparatus (i.e., language) can distinguish between these

20 *Dasein* is rendered in various translations of *Being and Time* as *Da-sein*, *da-sein*, and *Dasein* (always capitalized), and *dasein*. Each translation has reasonable linguistic or philosophical justifications. For my purposes, I follow the less common convention of simply using 'dasein' with all lowercase and no hyphenation to emphasize the commonality of being as such (*ordinary dasein*) before any differentiation into other modes of being that Heidegger recognizes as either *authentic dasein* or *inauthentic dasein*. Thus, *dasein* refers to that being which is every sentient human, and I will use *ordinary dasein* only when further distinction between *authentic dasein* and *inauthentic dasein* is necessary.

aspects of self. As subject and object, the unitary being *dasein* is therefore, itself, discursively constituted.

Mitsein (lit. “being-with”) presents a context to *dasein* as *being-in-the-world*, defining that context as a temporal and spatial proximity that brings *dasein* together with other *dasein*.²¹

Being-in-the-world is the awareness by *dasein* of its direct involvement with things, objects (anything, physical or conceptual) and other *dasein*, with an immediate sense of use in the present context. *Being-in-the-world* is constitutive of *dasein* in that it gives rise to an awareness and acceptance of the inevitability of one’s spatial and temporal finitude. This is the “there” of the *there-being* of the term *dasein*.

The world is nothing more than the sum of all phenomenological and imaginary or abstracted knowing as apprehended by *dasein* in its entirety. *Dasein* discloses its being (to itself) by recognizing itself as *being-with* other *dasein* in the world. As *dasein* can only be-in-the-world as it is interpreted, it has no immediate access to any objective sense of the world. Furthermore, while *dasein* may share many aspects of its subjective experience of the world in common with other *dasein*, no two *dasein*’s worlds will be exactly the same. Murakami’s text uses the word “world” in a similar manner, for all present, past, and future worlds.

Dasein and its objects

Ready-to-hand refers to the perceived nature objects that are encountered directly and interpreted as having an immediate use or purpose in the present world. “Objects”

²¹ “Being with Others belongs to the being of *Dasein*, which is an issue for *dasein* in its very being” (BT 161).

refers to any tangible or intangible objects, including symbols or other abstractions represented visually or in language.

Present-at-hand refers to the perceived nature of objects that are presented to *dasein* (by other *dasein*) as having a past use or purpose (history) and thus are interpreted as belonging to that past world.

Past is the nature of facticity of any object (tangible or intangible) that is inaccessible to *dasein* directly. *Dasein* has no means to engage in the facticity of any past, thus any past must be interpreted by *dasein* in the present *as past*, and giving a rise to an awareness of a former present that is no more. This is sometimes understood as “another world” by its nature of being inaccessible to *dasein* (or “irretrievably lost” in Murakami’s parlance).

Future, like past, is inaccessible to *dasein*, but lacks any sense of facticity to interpret, and is thus only an interpretation of projected facticity. Future is thus the projection of *dasein* into undetermined facticity, often experienced as a question, in the form of hypothesis or imagination (all imagination occurs in *dasein*’s future as it has yet to bear any sense of facticity).

Appropriation is that process by which *dasein* encounters directly or receives an object (from other *dasein* individually or generally through culture) and perceives it as an object *present-at-hand*.²² *Dasein* then transposes that object (through interpretation) into

²² “For the modern subject, Being becomes accessible when the ‘I’ as subject represents an object, or when an object is ‘brought forth’ by a subject and becomes fixed in its place. Such bringing forth confirms and affirms the place of the subject. Through the power of representation, the subject becomes the ‘reference point of beings as such’” (Sorail 18).

an object *ready-to-hand* as having some immediate use or purpose in the present world.²³

Has-been-handed-down refers to the perceived quality of those objects (tangible or intangible) that have been received by *dasein* as *present-at-hand* and are apprehended as belonging to a specific past and having bearing or influence on the constitution or interpretation of the present world. These objects are understood as an indeterminate set (as a set of objects vaguely similarly or “averagely associated,” but not necessarily limited to a specific or finite set) of objects. Heidegger’s term, “*has-been-handed-down*” most often refers to a cultural tradition or heritage that has the quality of being communicated between successive generations of *dasein*, each generation having successively appropriated and transposed that which *has-been-handed-down*. Heidegger’s *handing-down* is thus the iterative process of Derrida’s *bricolage*. Heidegger’s conception here results in a denial of any access to archaeological authenticity, as the process of *handing-down* acknowledges the transformation that occurs in *bricolage*, thus, any apprehension of historical objects *present-at-hand* already obscures any access to any supposed historical facticity or archaeological authenticity.

*Nostalgia*²⁴ is a limiting orientation of *dasein* toward the act of appropriation that obscures from *dasein* the transformational nature of appropriation as *bricolage*, resulting in a perception that objects *present-at-hand* are reconstituted through appropriation into objects *ready-to-hand*, and thereby the objects *present-at-hand* are perceived to retain all of their historical facticity. However, the facticity that *dasein* perceives is itself the product of *dasein*’s own projected interpretation of that facticity, though the

²³ “*Dasein* appropriates historical meaning in order to situate itself in the present. Such appropriation involves a transformation of historical meaning in such a way that it is able to accommodate *dasein*” (Barash 158).

²⁴ Heidegger does not define nostalgia.

interpretedness remains obscured to *dasein*. Nostalgia is a perceptual conflation of future and past, in that *dasein* projects a future use of an object *present-at-hand* as an object *ready-to-hand* in the present. As nostalgia obscures the interpretedness of the object, interacting with an object with nostalgia *dasein* keeps from being in the world authentically.

STRUCTURE

*Now, why reproduction?
It's because reproduction goes on forever;
it is what mortals have in place of immortality.²⁵*

There is an ancient, fundamental *structure* at work throughout *IQ84*, namely, the foundational Buddhist concept of dependent origination (a.k.a. co-arising, *pratītyasamutpāda*). Imagine the fourth century BCE Buddhist scholar Zhuangzi's butterfly dream, in which Zhuangzi questions whether he is Zhuangzi dreaming that he is a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming that he is Zhuangzi. The butterfly dream questions the very knowability of one's own self, and one's separation from one's environment. That is to say, the Zhuangzi butterfly parable questions whether the text can be separated from its context, and questions the causality of both—which causes the other? Which text is context for the other? The dowager at the Willow House in the swanky Azabu district of Tokyo, who acts as the mentor to Aomame as assassin (just as Komatsu is the mentor to Tengo the writer), keeps a sizeable collection of rare butterflies for some purpose that is never clearly revealed. Zhuangzi's parable, told through the dowager, is just one of the metaphors mentioned as organizing principles of *IQ84*. It is reflected in the two moons, in the parallel narratives of Aomame and Tengo, and in the discussions of good versus evil in the center of the text. The dowager does mention the purpose of the butterfly

²⁵ From "The Speech of Diotima" in *Symposium* (Plato 54).

indirectly, as she explains in a conversation with Aomame: “It [the butterfly] gets its nourishment from only one type of flower—a special flower that only grows in the mountains of Okinawa. You have to bring the flower here and grow it first if you want to keep this butterfly in Tokyo” (*IQ84* 80). The dowager is describing the very nature of dependent origination. Both the flower and the butterfly have co-evolved, each being the context for the other. For its part, the butterfly is already a product of transformation, having first been a grub that made its own chrysalis, spun from delicate threads. It emerges as an adult after having transformed itself in the home of its own making.

The concept of dependent origination is presented not only in the metaphors such as the butterfly dream, Aomame’s vision of two moons, and of two writers coming together to invent a new author, but also in the structure of the text itself, in the magnetic parallel threads of the protagonist dyad of Aomame and Tengo which are in dialog with one another. Rejecting the sterility of singular, repetitive, ideologies, and transcendental certainties, the dialogic text directs attention toward multiple perspectives, even perceptions that may challenge the assumptions of the perceiver. Rather than an univocal, singular perspective with a supposed message prepared by the author for the reader to receive and adopt wholesale, the dialogic structure of the text contributes the multiple or composite authorship of a text, and in turn gestures toward contexts as potentialities for each reader to apprehend and bring into meaning through interpretation. That is, the reader must participate in the creation of meaning with the text.

The gravity of structurality

Jacques Derrida’s essay, “Structure, Sign and Play” (*SSP*), confronts the assumption that in order for a thing to be recognized as a thing, it must cohere in some

fashion, which he uses to introduce his concept of “the structurality of structure.” Derrida observes that the apprehension of a thing as a coherent thing itself implies the existence of a center, whether that center is directly observed or not, and around which the structure is organized. The simplest metaphor to describe this would be a wheel with a hub in the center, to which all the spokes must connect in order for the wheel to be a wheel, or to use the term in physics “center of gravity.” Derrida asserts that the apparent necessity of a central organizing element is assumed solely from the apprehension of the thing as a coherent structure. Such apprehension carries with it the common assumption that the structure, *qua* structure, actually requires a center as its organizing principle of the structure. Derrida observes that in fact, the supposed center is only a construct that has arisen out of the apprehension of the thing as so defined by its perceived structure. The constellations as perceived in the sky exemplify of the structurality of structure. The arbitrary cluster of stars only exist as a coherent image, with a defining boundary and implied center, by the determination of them as such from the perspective of an observer in a particular hemisphere of the Earth. Conceived of in this manner, constellations themselves could be accurately defined as *gestalts*. The differences in the Greek and Chinese zodiacs exemplify the arbitrary nature of interpretation and the dependency on interpretation to fix meaning to the collection of stars as signs. The particular stars perceived in one location will not cohere into a similar cluster of stars to form a similar image when perceived from any other vantage point in the universe. Imagine a wheel with no axle in the center. It is still recognized as a wheel (that is, it has a structurality that adheres to the concept of wheel), despite its empty center.²⁶

²⁶ Wheels with hollow centers around which the tire rotates have existed since 1989, with a patent (footnote cont.)

The above examples show that a structure does not require any physical center around which it must be organized. Its *structurality* is evident through the apprehension of the interaction of the various components in relation to one another, which in turn implies the center of the apprehended structure. This is similar to the difference between “center” as a physical structure, versus “center of gravity” as the conceptual point around which all the collective mass of the structure as apprehended is averagely distributed. Center of gravity does not constrain the shape of the structure but is a conceptually apprehended center, or computationally derived from the distribution of the masses of various components which collectively constitute the structure as apprehended. Such is the case with Steiner’s description of Heidegger’s project mentioned earlier—two gears already in motion meshing together. These gears, each already in independent motion around their own independent axis, interact harmoniously to produce an entirely new apprehended system or recognizable structure with its own center of gravity.

As a structure, *IQ84* is manifested in just the way Steiner describes Heidegger’s ontology, with two independent narratives *in medias res*, gears in motion that mesh as interdependent narratives. Pushing this metaphor even closer to Heidegger’s conception of *dasein* as it pertains to *IQ84*, the same can also be said of the characters in those narratives emerging from their respective heritages and eventually coming together at the end of the novel. Below, I will discuss some of the structural elements of *IQ84*, and show how they mesh to form the structure of the novel. In the dialogic model discussed above, the constituent elements are free to interact around configurations independent of a single center, forming provisional structures and apparent centers. Beginning by accepting the

for them (pat. no. 5,071,196) being awarded to Franco Sbarro in 1991.

apparent noncentered structure as a given, I will use the metaphor of apparent independent motion of these elements, narrative structures, and characters (as gears), as a model for guiding my interpretation of how the novel signifies.

Composite authors

Murakami does not simply construct a response or antithesis to the prior work in the dystopic literary genre. Like gears already in motion, his novel is internally structured as two parallel third-person limited points of view representing the protagonist dyad Aomame and Tengo, while appropriating fragments of themes from its dystopian heritage.

Aomame²⁷ has numerous sexual excursions in Book 1 with her friend Ayumi. Aomame could easily be mapped as the Julia character in *1984*, whose attention to the body and sex prompts Winston to label her a “[r]ebel from the waist downwards” (*1984* 129). Tengo²⁸ teaches math and is employed on the side to rewrite things originally authored by others. As the intangible, intellectual, metaphysical author/mathematician representing the mind, Tengo could be the Winston Smith character. Together, Tengo and Aomame seem to form a tidy Cartesian duality.

However, most of these tidy binaries begin to mix attributes in Book 2, and by Book 3, their original Cartesian alignments are thoroughly redistributed. Where Orwell’s

²⁷ 「青豆」 lit. “Green Bean” (note the ‘seed/ovum/womb’ nature of the name). “Green Peas” in Jay Rubin’s translation. Aomame is a family name. Murakami goes on for more than a page (pp 3-4) on the difficulty her unusual name has given her. Her parents cut ties with their family and their mountain home (family hometown as in the country is a typically nostalgic characterization of family) when she was a child, and knows no others by that name.

²⁸ 「天吾」 lit. “Heaven Itself” is an uncommon, if not unique, given name (not appearing in common name dictionaries). The character 「吾」 not commonly used independently in modern Japanese, is historically the ‘universal’ pronoun (occurring first in the second oldest Japanese text, the *Kojiki*). It is nearly always used to refer to the speaking subject (“I”, “Me”), but can also be used as the reflexive pronoun (“itself”), and with restricted archaic use as the second person pronoun (“you”). (Nelson no. 37)

Julia remains a flat character, Aomame learns in a dialog with Leader in the middle of Book 2 that there is “some kind of will” (*IQ84* 466) that propels her. Aomame’s own motivations take on a more philosophical and reflective aspect as she reads Proust’s endless *In Search of Lost Time* and (exhibiting the discursive nature of *dasein*) debates fate and free will with herself. Meanwhile Tengo has a single, purely physical relationship in Book 1 with a woman ten years his senior (he notes repeatedly that it is a relationship built around extra-marital sex, not emotional bonding), has sex with Fuka-Eri in Book 2, and with one of his father’s nurses in Book 3. At the beginning of the novel, the apparently well-balanced structure does have two primary dimensions: Somewhat predictably, Tengo is to the abstract mind as Aomame is to the physical body. However, each dimension supports that balance only provisionally on the surface as the apparently well-balanced structure is ultimately thoroughly intermixed.

Murakami upsets the superficial structural balance in Book 3, with the addition of a third third-person limited point of view in the storyline of Mr. Ushikawa. His character traits are exactly those of the Ushikawa in Murakami’s earlier award winning novel, *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (*WUBC*), leading the informed reader to recognize these two appearances as being the same character with a narrative already in motion outside the world of *IQ84*, and through him, and other means, these two narratives become linked.²⁹ Ushikawa invites us to consider the many common themes between between *WUBC* and *IQ84*: both are set in 1984, both are obsessed with other worlds and long searches for the protagonists’ significant other, and both touch on elements of Japan’s history around the

²⁹ A separate exploration of the thematic interdependencies of *IQ84* and *WUBC* could be very fruitful. Themes of repressed personal and national history, personal and national identity, and the repetition of same, should be abundant. The insights of Japanese philosopher Kojin Karatani from *History and Repetition*, and Naoki Sakai’s *Deconstructing Nationality* could be quite useful.

Second World War.

Through the two plus narratives (rather than a rigidly mechanical ping-pong of only two), Murakami partially neutralizes some of the threat of the hegemonic dystopia that dominated *1Q84*'s predecessors, by adding a fecundity that bears fruit (Aomame has an immaculate conception, Tengo begins to write his own novel), while at the same time giving rise to the myriad microdystopic communities within the global. The centrality of dystopian control, or the source from which it emanates, is thus displaced in *1Q84* from a perceived central hierarchy to a diffuse intangible concept and ultimately deferred indefinitely. In a very Derridean way, the effect (that of centralized totalitarian oppression of the masses) eventually becomes caught up in the cause (that of the masses erecting their own totalitarian oppressors) to the point of almost being indistinguishable—a theme which resonates in the scenes of the dowager and the butterfly, and in Heidegger's *dasein*. Recall that for Heidegger, *dasein* emerges as a product of its world (context), but as *dasein* gains awareness of its *being-there*, *dasein* alters that same context by acting within it with anticipatory resoluteness. That is to say, at the moment *dasein* apprehends itself as temporally and spatially bound within a world that *has-been-handed-down*, it gains the ability to maneuver deliberately within that world. Attaining awareness regarding one's situatedness in one's world causes *dasein*'s world to be instantly and irretrievably changed, as that world is now open to interpretation by *dasein*, and now contains *dasien* in its awareness, unable to return to a prior benighted state.

Parallel narratives

The outward structure of *1Q84* avoids a central narrative voice, instead favoring to approach the theme (fate vs. free will, or centralized hierarchies vs. individuality) from various points of view that are, at least initially, independently in motion at the periphery. This is a crucial aspect of the *1Q84* message, in that this mode does not immediately establish a central protagonist or antagonist as the point of narrative leverage or resistance, as is the case in every other Orwellian dystopic narrative. *1984* launches right into “Big Brother is Watching You” on page one, whereas *1Q84* leaves direct engagement with the cult and its Leader until Book 2. An inherent byproduct of this narrative approach, orbiting a moving narrative from many points of view, is a swelling of the text into something of monstrous proportions. Rather than a direct approach to the inner circles of the literati, or the Inner Party as with Orwell, *1Q84* takes its time, mired in the banal language and goings-on of the periphery.

The convention of parallel narratives which Murakami adopts for *1Q84* erects a narrative that cannot be contained in one or the other of the stories alone—they must be apprehended simultaneously to get a complete picture, as a *gestalt*, where multiple minute parts are apprehended together as an inseparable whole (or structure). *Gestalt* would be the “organizing principle” of Murakami’s writing that will remain elusive so long as one is looking only for one-to-one substitutions. A point-by-point analytic mode will always fail when the object to be apprehended is in some way a monstrosity, that is, larger than a sharply focused gaze can perceive. As *gestalt*, the narratives in *1Q84* do not merely comment or mirror each other, as though crossing a uniform central axis, but they negotiate an interaction vaguely, almost circularly, each with an impetus of their own.

These narratives, like independently moving gears, eventually converge in a predictably banal love story. Nevertheless, they are impelled by independent wills as they enact the inevitability of fate and uncertainty of free will. Each trajectory can be said to be inflected, even if almost imperceptibly at first, by decisions of the individuals (as free will) and their subjectivities (personal interpretations of history), as much as it can be said to be merely the inevitable result of a larger inertial force (fate).

As with the protagonist dyad of Aomame and Tengo forming a seemingly tidy Cartesian duality which becomes thoroughly mixed by the end, *1Q84* initially appears to have a harmonious binaural narrative that is disrupted by the introduction of discordant third narrative, leading to an ongoing cascade of digressions. The narratives begin to converge after the death of Leader, beyond the realm of the organizing center of the totalitarian authorities that govern the worlds of *We*, *BNW*, and *1984*. Even so, the narrative *gestalt* does cohere sufficiently, before and after the convergence, to allow us to apprehend the collective narrative as a structured object recognizable as a novel. However, just as in psychotherapy, a *gestalt* stands as a mere suggestion, an invitation to interpret the *gestalt*, the novel resists presenting a specific problem that it is transposing, but suggests, by its structure, that the reader may interpret any number of specific problems as being transposed within it.

When Ushikawa gains a narrative thread of his own, the rhythmic binaural narrative is thrown into a new key or given a new time signature, offering a welcome deliverance from the otherwise weak and episodic plot. Ushikawa's narrative gear, in motion from the 1984 of *WUBC*, joins the dual narratives in *1Q84*, which are already moving independently and synchronously, as if multiple spinning worlds were about to

collide. The result is a world knocked off its axis and the narrative *gestalt* is thrown out of view. As the narrative gears mesh, drawing closer to each other throughout Book 3, the center of gravity is likewise constantly shifting, suggesting the possibility for unexpected outcomes previously inconceivable under the predictably steady rhythm of the harmonious binary narrative of the protagonist dyad.³⁰

Embedded narratives

*Appropriating *Town of Cats**

If the primary narrative threads in dialog with each other exist more or less on the same level as *gestalt*, the other organizing principle is that of embedding or nesting narratives. Embedded narratives are often, and effectively, use as flashbacks. However, the most conspicuous of the embedded stories is only a flashback of sorts and contests the question of authenticity in writing discussed above. This is *Town of Cats*, which was highlighted in the September 12, 2011 *New York Times* preview featuring an interview with translator Jay Rubin. *Town of Cats* is already a *play-giarized* tale, a retelling of Sakutarō Hagiwara's 1935 story, though Murakami gives him no authorial citation. The lack of citation here is arguably an instructive performance of the primary contested themes, namely "originary" or archaeological authenticity. That is to say that just as Orwell, and Huxley before him, responded to prior works with recognizable traces of their literary ancestry found in their own progeny, one would be quite mistaken to write off either *1984* or *BNW* as inauthentic or unoriginal works. Similarly, Murakami's own

³⁰ The numerous metaphors mixed in this paragraph demonstrate the sort of chaos that is produced when mixing narratives through appropriation. The *bricolage* of the text becomes eclectic, with traces of multiple heritages in potentially jarring juxtaposition. Nevertheless, the paragraph or narrative still coheres in some vague way, as *gestalt*.

Town of Cats, though bearing the same sort of striking resemblances to Hagiwara's, does not merely respond to or repeat Hagiwara's narrative. Appropriating Hagiwara's story in this manner invites not only new interpretations, but also new interpretations of Hagiwara's own as it has now become the predecessor, and interpretations of the dialog suspended in the difference of the two stories.

For example, consider that in same year Hagiwara wrote *Town of Cats*, 1935, Adolf Hitler was elected President of the Reich in Germany and a coupe d'état was staged in Japan by ultranationalists seeking to end the budding democracy begun under the Taisho emperor. Within a year of Hagiwara's *Town of Cats* being published, Japan had agreed to the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, unifying Japan and Germany against a rising international Communist threat and linking their cultural experiments with fascism. By appropriating Orwell at the macro scale (1984 to 1Q84), and re-representing *Town of Cats* as a German tale at the embedded scale, Murakami externalizes a remnant of a previously suppressed Japanese cultural memory, making it visible, distanced, and thus available for scrutiny. These parallel appropriations undermine claims that these or any nationalistic ideologies are containable within cultural or national borders.

Furthermore, appropriating the titles exactly, without attributing authorship to either story, performs a repetition of the past with eerie implications that the past is already repeating in the present. Deriving meaning out of the phantasm of repetition with awareness of the specific appropriations, which are inevitable and abundant, we might see a warning that the recurrence of extreme ideologies from the past has already begun. These ideologies have emerged from the dark recess of the repressed or forgotten

collective past, and have already embedded themselves in a new host. As with a virus, these archaic ideologies are unable to replicate alone, and are thus impelled by their ontological desire for collective signification to seek a host in the minds of individuals. The literary hosts in *IQ84* would be characters as component parts of the extreme ideologies' own grammar, much in the way a virus inscribes its own single-stranded viral RNA into the host's own dual-stranded DNA, causing the host to undergo a metamorphosis into an agent for viral ideology's own agenda.

Air Chrysalis as mythopoeisis

Unlike the overtly embedded and unattributed *Town of Cats*, the embedded nature of *Air Chrysalis* by the character Fuka-Eri is so covert that it is barely noticeable; some fragments buried many layers deep within the narrative structure. Yet having been drawn out of thin air, *Air Chrysalis* seems to set the agenda for all of *IQ84* from behind the veil of the protagonist dyad, just as a virus compels its host to act out the viral script forced upon it from within. Perhaps the greatest difficulty with *Air Chrysalis* (and, by extension, *IQ84*) is the mercurial presentation of story about the creation of story, making it difficult to find within it a particular problem that it is *supposed* to transpose. As with the liquid metal, the more poking around for some supposed problem within, the more the mercurial story breaks up to get out of the way of the observer's influence.

As discussed earlier, *Air Chrysalis* is the subject of literary reviews within *IQ84* that bear resemblance to the reviews of *IQ84* itself, some reviewers even quoting the reviews of *Air Chrysalis* in *IQ84* in their critique of *the novel IQ84*. Is this circularity a coincidence, or could it have been anticipated by Murakami as a part of his critique of the "literary circles," he apparently loathes? Schulz and Baxter's appropriations of Komatsu

seem to have been anticipated, as if writing in order to be appropriated, in the way that Murakami not only *play-giarized* Hagiwara and appropriated Orwell, but may have also *play-giarized* Orwell's own literary criticism of his predecessors. The lineage of *Air Chrysalis* would then be generations: From Zamyatin's *We* and Huxley's *BNW*, to Orwell's criticisms of the same before penning his own *1984*, to *Air Chrysalis* in *1Q84*, to Komatsu's criticism of *Air Chrysalis* in *1Q84*, to Schultz's using Komatsu's critique of *Air Chrysalis* to critique *1Q84*. Interpreting the mind of the author as anticipating the future or intentionally *play-giarizing* the past is only a speculative way to show that *1Q84*, compelled by *Air Chrysalis*, has already inserted itself into the genes of dystopic literature, and will likely inflect the future interpretations.

Further embedded in *Air Chrysalis* is Fuka-Eri's own tale of being isolated (or, totally embedded) within a reclusive cult, itself isolated within the mountains of Yamanashi Prefecture, very near the center of Japan's main island, Honshu. It is tempting to take the reference to Yamanashi as a simple allusion to *Aum Shinri Kyo*, which was founded in 1984 in Yamanashi prefecture.³¹ However, interpreting Sakigake not as a specific allusion but as composite appropriation which produces a *gestalt*, then many allusions would be possible, each determined by the reader. Consider that in 2008, while Murakami was writing *1Q84*, two reclusive cults in the US were raided by authorities for suspicion of sexual abuse of teenagers.³² I have identified only three of many possible

³¹ Murakami's characterization of Sakigake does bear a striking resemblance to *Aum Shinri Kyo* (lit. "Supreme Truth Sect"), founded in 1984 by Shoko Asahara, which took responsibility for the 1995 Sarin gas attacks in Tokyo subways. Later, a militarized faction, *Akebono* (lit. "Dawn, Daybreak, Beginning"), broke away from *Aum Shinri Kyo* and took up residence in a nearby abandoned town. Murakami wrote about the attacks through a series of interviews of the victims in the 2001 book, *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*.

³² "Three teenagers have been removed from a remote New Mexico compound run by a self-described messiah in a new case involving a religious sect and allegations of sex abuse[...]. He also writes (footnote cont.)

allusions to cults for Sakigaki, which, as I have described it, is a compound appropriation, a *gestalt* of “cult,” which the reader may appropriate and transform into an allusion to a specific sect (or sects) outside of the text.

Fuka-Eri emerges from the many layers of her embedded isolation with and through a story. Yet Fuka-Eri’s dyslexia isolates her still once more, making language itself her most proximal isolation *within herself*. This critical detail means that Fuka-Eri cannot write, so the only means available to tell her story is direct oral transmission. Indeed, without the fixity of writing, or an interlocutor with whom she can share a memory, her being would be trapped in a never-ending present tense unable to establish a symbolic referent of there (be it spatial or temporal) to which she can point. Heidegger recognizes this as *mitsein*, a constitutive aspect of *dasein*. Fuka-Eri’s layers of isolation thus begin with dyslexia (no writing to express her inner self to a future interlocutor), then gender (female in a culture typically male dominant), a minor (17 years-old, without the independent rights of a legal adult), in an oppressive cult (run by her own father), and in a very homogenous society (Japan).

Being so impossibly confined, physically, sexually, culturally, and linguistically, Fuka-Eri must seize upon the incomprehensible by giving it form in order for it to take on meaning. Appropriating the signs around her to signify something not already present would seem to invite questions of possibilities other than her confinement. Yet without an interlocutor, Fuka-Eri is bereft of *mitsein* from which to receive a heritage as that which

about virgins visiting him in his bed, but claims he declined their requests for sex.[...]The case has eerie echoes of last month’s police raid of a remote Texas ranch that is home to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, a polygamist sect. Texas cops took away more than 400 children because they believe the kids were in danger of being sexually abused.[...]Texas officials said about 60 percent of the girls under the age of 17 were either pregnant or already mothers” (Schoetz 1).

has-been-hand-down and is unable to productively engage in discourse in order to situate herself in her world. Her recourse is to draw upon mythopoeisis: a form of composite appropriation, as Derrida's *bricolage*, that is made out of the cultural detritus as it *has-been-handed-down* to her, and must also function as *gestalt* in order to for her to make fragmentary sensibility in her otherwise incomprehensible world.

Myth, *bricolage*, and *gestalt*

Above I have described several examples of appropriation, the act necessary for Heidegger's *dasein* to orient itself in its world. Appropriation is analogous to Derrida's *bricolage*, producing a new object that may bear recognizable fragments of its heritage, yet is structurally recognizable as a new object, with its own center of gravity. *Bricolage* is observable in Murakami's own composite authorship and in his own composite characters, especially the protagonist dyad Tengo and Aomame who are more than simple one-to-one mappings of Orwell's Winston and Julia. *Bricolage* also is demonstrated in the characters who themselves join to form a composite author of the published story, *Air Chrysalis*, and in the embedding of numerous appropriated stories, either wholly appropriated such as Hagiwara's *Town of Cats*, or through fragments (as in Disney's dwarfs). *Bricolage*, then is the product of composite appropriation, which may offer fragmentary signs to the past, but simultaneously places the past beyond immediate access, thus requiring interpretation.

Gestalt, then could be the co-arising concept to *bricolage*, as the future oriented invitation to interpret the *bricolage*. *Gestalt* denies a unity of an object's interpretation in the same way that *bricolage* denies the unity of the same object's past. Both of these gestures toward definition suggest that meaning beyond what is immediately interpreted

can never be disclosed. Thus, disclosure of meaning as originating in any past as some singular, unique concept, by following the interpretations previously made by handing-down, one by one, is immediately complicated by the interpretation of the objects themselves in the present. The iterative process of Heidegger's *handing-down*, which produces *bricolage*, must itself be interpreted. Discovery of any archaeological authenticity would be only by chance, and without any way to confirm whether one had arrived at the origin of meaning, as the conception of what that original meaning has already been interpreted, iteratively, by its being *handing-down*.

Thus the attempt to locate one's unique, authentic self can never be achieved by searching for one's own origins in a given place or time. As I argued above, the only authenticity available, as that which is uniquely one's own, is interpreted authenticity created through appropriation, *bricolage*, as the result of composite appropriations of one's heritage as it *has-been-handed-down*, which has itself already been interpreted through iterations of *handing-down*. Take the earlier exploration of the unusual, even unique names of the protagonist dyad. Murakami has constructed both characters as detached from their heritage. Confronting the problem of physical origin, Aomame's parents had severed family ties when they left the nostalgic farming village in Fukushima prefecture.³³ Tengo has only a single vague memory of his mother, and learns that the man who he thought was his biological father was a replacement, who had worked his entire life collecting payment for images and stories broadcast invisibly through the air. I showed earlier that both characters have exceptionally unusual, even unique names, as if

³³ Fukushima prefecture is where the nuclear disaster occurred on March 11, 2011. The nuclear disaster has since appropriated the nostalgic sense Murakami set up, eerily becoming a permanently inaccessible hometown due to the considerable exclusion zone around the nuclear plant that was formerly family-owned farmland.

confirming the uncertainties in their conceptual origins, .

However, whereas Tengu and Aomame received their names from their parents, a symbol of identity that *has-been-handed-down*, the name Fuka-Eri is entirely unique, a *bricolage* she created as a contracted appropriation of her original full name, given in Japanese surname-firstname order, Fukada Eriko 「深田絵里子」. The remaining characters that comprise her name reveal a deeper meaning embedded in her otherwise very common Japanese name. The three remaining characters in her self-made name, 「深絵里」, are individually: *fuka* 「深」 meaning “deep/profound,” *e* 「絵」 meaning “image/picture/sketch,” and *ri* 「里」 meaning “origin/hometown.” Together, Fuka-Eri’s own name, as she has appropriated it, could mean something like “Deep image of home,” or, I allow myself a bit of creativity, “Profoundly Nostalgic *Gestalt*.” After describing her name as being derived from the characters of her given name, Murakami further separates Fuka-Eri from her origins by writing her name only in the Japanese hiragana syllabary, following naming conventions he has used in many other works. Fuka-Eri’s name is in this way both *bricolage*, formed by appropriating fragments of her name as it was *handed-down* to her, and a *gestalt* that invites interpretation. Her unique name further resists specific signification by its representation in hiragana, denying any appeal to archaeological signification through the use of Chinese ideographs. Together, these multiple appropriations and interpretations that are presented as Fuka-Eri could be taken to mean that she is herself a myth in that she has symbolically arisen from an unspecified, untraceable past (as signified by her name’s origin). In this way, Fuka-Eri, like myth, must always be interpreted.

Air Chrysalis is a myth in a similar way, because it seems to emerge from an origin beyond specific memory (that of involuntary memory), given as coming out of the dead blind goat's (mythic past) mouth (language), and defies specific signification or allusions to a supposedly stable referent. Using Murakami's habit of including reference or allusion to Ancient Greek culture in all of his larger novels, he notes in *IQ84* that it was Plato "who said the human soul is composed of reason, will, and desire" (*IQ84* 174). Following the invocation of Plato, the image of the Little People emerging from the blind dead goat's mouth and immediately singing can be reasonably interpreted as an allusion to the etymology of "tragedy," derived from the Greek for "goat song,"³⁴ situating the origin of *Air Chrysalis* at the mythic origins of (Western) culture. With these possible allusions in mind, the Little People emerging from the dead (past), blind (Homer, *biwahōshi*³⁵) goat's (tragedy) mouth (oral) and singing (folkloric) could then be interpreted as a story that *has-been-handed-down* by oral tradition in the same way Homer's *Iliad* or Japan's *Heike Monogatari* were handed down by blind singing bards. Marching together, Little People immediately set about the weaving of a chrysalis out of thin air, to, "pluck threads out of the air and make a home" (*IQ84* 535) while singing in unison their inexplicably familiar Disney-esque³⁶ song, "Ho, Ho!"³⁷

Fuka-Eri's story, *Air Chrysalis*, has thus been newly appropriated from her own cultural heritage, placing her within a context in which she has produced her own

³⁴ Tragedy is derived from the Greek, 'τραγῳδία' (tragōidia,) lit. "male-goat song."

³⁵ Some accounts suggest that Homer was a blind, itinerant poet, who performed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with a musical rhythm, often accompanied by a lute. Similarly, Japan's *biwahōshi* (*biwa* means lute, *hōshi* means priest) were often blind, itinerant bards who would sing the epic tale *Heike Monogatari*.

³⁶ Most of Disney's animated feature films are appropriations of folklore from Europe (e.g. *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*), and later from other cultures such as Africa (e.g., *Lion King*) and China (e.g., *Mulan*).

³⁷ Appropriation also escapes copyright infringement.

interlocutors in the Little People, as *tulpas*. A *tulpa*, an idea originating in ancient Buddhist mysticism, is a phantasm made real through extreme will or by the power of an intense utterance. A *tulpa* can take on any form and characteristics given it by its creator, though *tulpas* often have personified characteristics.

Fuka-Eri's *tulpas* enable her first steps out of her multilayered confinement. Recalling that in order for Fuka-Eri to be *dasein*, she must also be *mitsein*. However, there are no *others* with whom she can *be with* in her extreme isolation. Her myth *Air Chrysalis* thus necessarily co-arises with the Little People as *tulpas*, creating both a narrative home and others with whom she immediately begins dialog, providing her first step as emerging *dasein* to escape the physical confines of the reclusive cult, into culture. After escaping from the cult (with the aid of her father), Fuka-Eri then broadens her social structure by telling her story to her friend Azami, who in turn transcribes it and submits it to the magazine, where it is rewritten by Tengo to become a best seller. Each step of transgressing a confine, Fuka-Eri brings her own identity forward into ever broader and broader contexts, until she is a being within Japan's literary establishment and culture at large.

The trajectory of this story by the dyslexic 17-year-old girl is many layers removed from our reading, and in the process, it crosses many boundaries of isolation: real vs. fiction, high vs. low literature, and cultural, ideological, physical boundaries. All of this is facilitated by the telling of a story to an interlocutor, a conceptual *other* outside of the immediate boundary of self. As well, the story is transposed by appropriation at each boundary, in the same way that Zamyatin's *We* is appropriated by Huxley, and again by Orwell, and again by Murakami. A narrative crosses many generations and cultures,

interpreted and transposed at each iteration. Each iteration is in dialog with the past, inviting interpretations with the next, in a process of endless interpretive appropriation. This fecund process does not merely replicate, but produces an entirely new narrative, emerging from the detritus of the past while gaining a recontextualized invigorated vitality.

For Fuka-Eri, that which *has-been-handed-down* is the collective mythic heritage that emerges out of the dead goat's mouth as her own appropriation of the past. Some sort of will propels Fuka-Eri to confront her fate, by fashioning the personal narrative that ultimately liberates her from effacing effects of her many layers of isolation. Bereft of symbolic referents and interlocutors through her confinement in the dark shed with the blind dead goat, Fuka-Eri creates referents, symbolized in the Little People—her *tulpas* made real by sheer will—which could be understood as echoes of folklore, through which she learned language. But in her isolation, Fuka-Eri's referents have become vague and fragmented memories suspended in a incomprehensible jumble of words separated from their meanings. She immediately engages in a dialog of words with her *tulpas*, making a narrative home for herself, an *Air Chrysalis*, into which she places her newly born, vulnerable identity. Creating *Air Chrysalis* causes Fuka-Eri to undergo a metamorphosis, through ontic writing, a dependent origination of author as creator and text as created—a text that makes its own context as a grub weaves its own cocoon. Telling her story to her friend Azami, she speaks herself into a new context, and the process of transposing her story continues.

INTERLUDE III

Epistemic vs mythomorphic discourse

Earlier I mentioned Jay Rubin's observation that Murakami never discloses the meanings of his symbols. This could be because Murakami's stories are not epistemic descriptions of things as they are, providing answers to questions, but are myths structured to elicit questions of what is or may be. Derrida explains: "In opposition to epistemic discourse, structural discourse on myths—mythological discourse—must itself be mythomorphic" (*SSP* 286). Where Orwell could use the entire apparatus of *1984* to serve as an epistemic warning of the excesses of totalitarian regimes, Murakami's symbols, allegories, or metaphors cannot point to a singular meaning because the message is not epistemic. Epistemic discourse, as being separate from its object, could be viewed as maintaining that separation through questions favoring "either/or" constructions of inquiry, whereas mythomorphic discourse poses questions while implicating itself in the question, resulting in "and/also."

Continuing with my suggestion above that *Air Chrysalis* is a myth, and that *1Q84* is thereby a story about myth making, it follows that *1Q84* could be productively read as a mythomorphic discourse, with possible messages always remaining provisional, requiring interpretation by the reader, including the framing of the questions the reader seeks to explore within it.

Appropriation and mythopoesis bring together various objects *handed-down* (as

myth or folklore) by *dasein* to a new myth as it enters its new context (an act of *care*) in order for *dasein* to have immediate access to (by way of understanding rather than merely knowing) the object. To observe *IQ84* as mythomorphic is to avoid any appeal to the transcendental or the metaphysical models as offering any archaeological authenticity, as would be expected with epistemic discourse. Instead, through the invocation of mythologicals as a tendential, projective motion toward understanding by making signs and thus meaning in the always present world, the reader (with Fuka-Eri as a model), constructs their own world and themselves, resulting in interpreted authenticity. This is a “progressive reading [that] is crucially determined by the adversarial or agonistic situation itself; it is effective because it uses the subversive, messy mask of camouflage and does not come like a pure avenging angel speaking the truth of a radical historicity and pure oppositionality, [...] *a heterogeneous emergence (not origin)*” (Bhabha 2386, my emphasis). Bhabha’s “heterogenous emergence” occurs when independent narratives, each with independent impetus, as with Steiner’s gears in motion, converge. Convergence is carried out through appropriation—not by totalization, which would produce again ontological vertigo by consuming the signs wholesale, as in merely following their supposed links, without the necessary interpretation, leaving no reference points by which to orient one’s self within a context.

Mitsein in language

There are two elements of Heidegger’s ontology necessary for *dasein* to carry out the task of appropriating its heritage as it *has-been-handed-down*. The necessity of language as the means to hand heritage down, and the presence of another to act as

interlocutor³⁸ as that being from whom heritage is handed down. Appropriation, as constituted, is simply impossible without the dialogic structure of being with an interlocutor and language. “Being with Others belongs to the being of *dasein*, which is an issue for *dasein* in its very being” (BT 161).

Again, Fuka-Eri as my paradigm for *dasein*, first disclosed her being to herself through her *tulpas* as interlocutors with the blind dead goat as her heritage, in the isolation of the cult’s shed, becoming *ordinary dasein*. With her *tulpas* in the form of the Little People, she was then *mitsein*, and able to appropriate her heritage into a new context by participating in the weaving of the *Air Chrysalis*. Seeing her own action alter her world with the *Air Chrysalis*, Fuka-Eri gained the awareness of her finitude and her inevitable death, which knocked her back from eternity into the realm of possibilities, that of being in her present world as an individual with interpreted authenticity. Her awareness of her finitude is expressed in her need to escape Sakigake, acting with anticipatory resoluteness to change her possibilities in her future (handing herself down to herself), making her own future heritage. This continued as she told her story to her friend Azami, placing her story outside of herself, making it an object of culture to be handed down (to herself). Fuka-Eri’s expanding worlds are all dependent upon her being *mitsein* (as being *with-others*) in those worlds. In a social sense, *mitsein* is the necessary context within which the individual *dasein* emerges (as text) within a world (as context). Thus, in each new context, a new form of interlocutor is necessary in order for her to orient herself within it as an individual—a text. As with the butterfly discussion of the

³⁸ Language and interlocutor are co-dependent in their very conception, each reciprocally implying the other. Language within one’s self, however, is possible, as in “talking to myself” clearly demonstrates.

wealthy dowager to keep a collection of butterflies as something more than mere metaphor, Fuka-Eri has first constructed her own context with the Little People, and then in dialog with that context, she constructs her new identity as text.

Thus stabilized as a being by situating herself with others, Fuka-Eri has created a reference *other* which initiates the differentiation first spatially and immediately thereafter temporally—the origin of a past and memory—effectively constructing a past for herself upon which to reflect by relating her story to them. That is, in as much as Fuka-Eri has constructed a mythos in *Air Chrysalis*, she establishes a personal past as *has-been-handed-down* from her own mythic past, which she can now perceive as other than her being in the present (herself as memory in the past as distinct from her present experience of herself). Heidegger defines this temporality as first being negotiated through *care* (of all that which has been handed down), which is that mode of being which unifies the being of the present as having resulted from a past, and which postulates a futurity to which it will in turn hand itself. This process, derived first from an awareness of *mitsein*, is made possible by language:

Being-together-with others, it keeps itself in an average interpretedness that is articulated in discourse and expressed in language. Being-in-the-world has always already expressed *itself*, and *as being-together-with* beings encountered within the world, it constantly expresses *itself* in addressing and talking over what is taken care of. (BT 373)

We see in Heidegger the necessity to interpret one's past through discourse with those encountered in the world at the present moment, in order to situate one's self in the world as a category of being. For my purposes here, the Heidegger's "average interpretedness" is most easily understood as a *gestalt*, as I have used the term. That is, *gestalt* indicates a variability, a mutability to the experience of being that is neither stable in its interpretation nor absolute in its ideal but nevertheless coalesces around an average of

possible interpretations. The result being that as the interpretation varies in its particulars (over time, within various contexts, etc.), it nonetheless maintains a vaguely recognized coherence of structure or stability.

Ontic writing as *ereignis*

Heidegger asserts that this interpretation is itself based on the appropriation of *dasein*'s own context, or "Being as Appropriation" (qtd. in Donkel 67). Heidegger's introduction to *Being and Time* includes a lengthy digression of its own into Greek etymology, especially the possible implications for the words *logos*, *aletheia*, and especially *ereignis*, understood by Heidegger as the event of appropriation that reveals the past as already interpreted, an event that occurs as language (not through or by language).

Douglas Donkel carries out an in-depth comparison of the use of the term and concept of "difference" between Heidegger and Derrida, noting that the differencing which demarcates the boundary between self and other occurs simultaneously as language, as the sight of presencing which Heidegger termed *ereignis*. Heidegger's *ereignis* was a reflection to *dasein* made possible through discourse with the *other*:

This means that man does not bring presencing through language, but that language as the site of presencing brings man....man does not accomplish language, but rather undergoes language....This means that man's role as a linguistic being is basically one of passive receptivity to what comes to presence in and through language itself. (Donkel 69)

Ereignis here is the act of presencing one's own self to one's self by appropriating one's heritage and constructing a new heritage in which one finds oneself able to create such a heritage. Put another way, *ereignis* reveals to *dasein* its own ability to appropriate its own heritage and hand that appropriated heritage down to itself in the future. If I may force

my own conception into Heideggerian vernacular, it would be to say, “The mode of being for *authentic dasein* is that of being mythologically through *care*.”

For *dasein* to understand its being, it must also interpret it. “Interpretation is not the acknowledgement of what has been understood, [this would be apprehension] but rather the development of possibilities projected in understanding[...] As understanding, *dasein* projects its being upon possibilities” (BT 139). Heidegger clearly notes the necessity to alter what is received as knowledge or history *in order to understand it*. Understanding is a transformative project, not a static recall of facts. The result of the transformative process that Heidegger calls interpretation, which separates that which was received into that which is present, is carried out by *dasein* in language. I derive the concept of ontic writing from Heidegger’s handling of understanding as the transformative process that produces possibilities as the means by which *dasein* understands itself. Ontic writing, then, is the event, the *ereignis*, of writing *dasein*’s appropriations with the anticipation that it will be received by *dasein* in the future as that which made *dasein* itself in the world. *Dasein*’s appropriation is not to be confused with simple incorporation, or the consumption of heritage uninterpreted—that would be totalizing colonization—because it is dependent upon the perceived stability of the *other* in order to maintain its relative position in the world as interlocutor in language. The relationship enabled by appropriation leaves the *other* as itself, and thus situates the self as *being-with*.

Ontic writing is a personal metamorphic mythopoesis, wherein *dasein* appropriates (fragments of) its heritage as language (folklore) and “speaks itself” in dialog with others resulting in the *bricolage* that *dasein* subsequently receives passively

in language as itself. This is just the example that *IQ84* offers with Fuka-Eri's creation of *Air Chrysalis*: in the midst of her extreme isolation as not being in any world. Her first act is to create *tulpas* to be her own interlocutors (to situate herself as *mitsein*) as the Little People who emerge in dialog (there is never one), and immediately engages with her own *tulpas* in dialog (necessitating language). In this way, through her story *Air Chrysalis*, Fuka-Eri has "spoken herself" into being in the world.

SIGN

*There is no unity or absolute source of the myth.
The focus or the source of the myth are always shadows and virtualities
which are elusive, unactualizable, and nonexistent in the first place.
Everything begins with the structure, the configuration, the relationship.
The discourse on this acentric structure, the myth, that is,
cannot itself have an absolute subject or an absolute center.
In order not to short change the form and the movement of the myth,
that violence which consists in centering a language
which is describing an acentric structure
must be avoided.³⁹*

After noting the absence of a central narrative, evidenced in both the narrative structure and in the emptiness at the center of the embedded story *Air Chrysalis*, we are now prepared to discuss more clearly the nature of this absent center, or the “Sign” of Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play.” Murakami throws all of these questions about structure, incest, metaphysics, good and evil, fate and free will, and more into play, including the incestuous relationship between Fuka-Eri and her father, the central figure of the reclusive Sakigake cult.

Heisenberg mythomorphic ambiguity

Already the *Paper Moon* epitaph and the title of the first chapter, “Don’t Let Appearances Fool You,” warn the reader that the world they are about to encounter is phony and illusory but made real by believing. On the very first line of text, Aomame

³⁹ From Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play,” (SSP 286).

hears an echo of the past, Janáček's *Symphonietta*, as if the past had caught up to her while she was confined in the taxicab stuck in traffic on the elevated expressway. This sparks a chain of associations of names and dates which point to events of a specific past, serving as a reorientation for Aomame's present. Leaving the elevated expressway as if it were a "Floating Bridge of Dreams,"⁴⁰ Aomame descends into an alternate 1984, which she dubs *IQ84* to suggest it bears a question. "Question" here indicates that the referent of the sign has yet to be fixed with meaning. Before Aomame's encounter with Leader, her policewoman friend, Ayumi, investigates the Sakigake cult at the center of *IQ84* and notes: "this religion's substance is its lack of substance. In McLuhanesque terms, 'the medium is the message.' 'In other words, the package itself *is* the contents. Is that it?' 'Exactly. The characteristics of the package determine the nature of the contents, not the other way around'" (*IQ84* 289).

As a mythomorphic world, *IQ84* presents indeterminate architectures of possible⁴¹ appropriations awaiting interpretation. It is the medium, suspended in time, where signification has yet to establish signs with referents, and thereby initiates the sequence of cause and effect, which are the means by which time is observed. As with the lyrics of *Paper Moon*, where belief alone resolves the phoniness of the world into a specific reality, the initial construction of a sign requires only an arbitrary determination of will. This alone can collapse all the potentialities for a given signifier into one and

⁴⁰ "The Floating Bridge of Dreams" is the enigmatic, unfinished last chapter of the classical Japanese masterpiece, *The Tale of Genji*. Some scholars believe that it may not be the work of the purported original author, Murasaki Shikibu. The chapter's title, "The Floating Bridge of Dreams" is the source of the popular genre of woodblock prints, Ukiyo-E, popular during Japan's Sakoku era. "[T]he title...is meant to make the reader aware that the affairs of men and women, the sorrows and joys of life, are no more than a dream, and that all material and living things are impermanent and illusory" (Shirane 192). Compare with the "Paper Moon" lyrics.

⁴¹ "Architectures of Possibility" (2012) is the title of a text for creative writing by Lance Olsen.

only one referent, one reality; just as with the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, where the perceiving subject actually alters the object perceived by merely perceiving. In such a world, a question like “Is Big Brother Sakigake’s Leader, *or* the Little People?” in an epistemological mode is absurd. It poses possible referents, but the laws of the mythomorphic world would yield simultaneous “Yes” *and* “No” answers. Prior to actual signification, all ideas are strictly conceptual potentials.

In a mythomorphic mode of second order of signs, simply asking the question ‘who is...’ would be to ask a question in the form of a *gestalt* and expect a *gestalt* as an acceptable answer awaiting further interpretation. For example, the question, “Who is Big Brother” might take on the form, “Big Brother is one of many names for the averagely interpreted concept of totalizing power by which a society may be forcibly organized.”

Or, as with Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics, the perceived structure is merely stable as it is perceived, not as it is. That is, the act of perceiving introduces a force upon the object being perceived and thereby changes the object to be perceived before it is perceived as an object. Similarly, merely observing a mythomorphic object in an epistemic mode will cause the mythomorphic ambiguity to adapt to the force of the epistemic inquiry, in the way that the liquid metal Mercury takes on the shape of the structure (as a force) that is used to contain it. Already I have explored ways that the text avoids stable transcendental signification in its structure and various modes of appropriation. Recall the earlier discussion of Professor Ebisuno’s dialog with Tengo about Orwell’s Big Bother: “There’s no longer any place for a Big Brother in this real world of ours.” (1Q84 236). It is as if the mythomorphic text is constructed in the awareness of its own mythomorphic structure.

Signs of *dasein*

I have suggested in the examples above a concept known by various names as the ontological desire for identity coherence, which creates meaning through the making of signs. This ontological desire is evident in an individual's desire to recognize their own coherence as uniquely themselves, and manifests as homogeneity in social structures, including cults and nations. The ontological vertigo experienced by *dasein* as it emerges into its present world stems from the ambiguity of the signs as it apprehends them. Seeking to orient itself in the world, *dasein* produces its own orientation toward the world by interpreting the world: interpretation as appropriating the signifiers in the present world and transposing them into signs by associating signified objects. *Dasein's* appropriation is, in other words, a symbolic activity of making signs. Heidegger calls this process *ereignis*, the making of signs in language that *dasein* sees as its own making, thus reflecting the being of *dasein* back to itself. The ontological desire to cohere as a structure is the will that propels the making of signs. Sign making is a linguistic poesis, to make a thing, in this case a self, comprehensible (taken as real) through the making of signs. Douglas Donkel, observing the necessity to always make meaning in language by differentiation writes, "difference therefore does not 'happen in language,' but rather 'is the happening of language'" (Donkel 69). The making of signs, not the *a priori* meaning of particular signs, is the appropriative nature of language. As with the example of dyslexic Fuka-Eri's own symbolic production of language out of thin air—simultaneously with her self-produced interlocutors—she emerges to herself (*ereignis*) in her own narrative, illustrating the argument that "being is the happening of language," or that language is constitutive of *dasein's* being.

If *dasein* is that being which apprehends itself as being *in-the-world* and as that being which makes signs for its own interpretation of itself in that world, then mythomorphically speaking, *dasein* is already its own *tulpa*, made real by an act of will to speak to itself. Samuel Beckett's *Unnameable* demonstrates this act of sign-making on the first order codes of language with startling simplicity.⁴² Beckett begins the last of his epic trilogy of novels as simply, *The Unnameable*, with self-orienting questions which call one's self into being, "Where now? When now? Who now? Unquestioning" (Beckett 291). As mythomorphic discourse, Murakami's *IQ84* seems to be attempting a similar demonstration on the second order codes of mythological discourse. Significantly, Beckett's unnamed protagonist pauses the act of creation at the statement, "unquestioning," when the inceptive signs (as interrogatives) have flooded the emergent world and then need time for apprehension. The dialog with self resumes when those interrogatives gain provisional answers.

As the center of the reclusive cult, within a text that is aware of its own mythomorphic structure, Leader explains that Aomame came to *IQ84* by a form of will, though he does not explain it further.

Leader: You came with a purpose, led by a form of will, to this world of *IQ84*.

Aomame: What kind of will, and what kind of purpose?

Leader: It has not been given to me to explain that, sorry to say.[...]

Aomame: Why are you unable to explain it?

Leader: It is not that the meaning cannot be explained. But there are certain meanings that are lost forever the moment they are explained in words.

(*IQ84* 466, my formatting as dialog)

Leader is the only one aware that Aomame has dubbed her world *IQ84*, even possessing an uncanny knowledge of Aomame's past and her inner thoughts. This is perhaps an

⁴² "“Since myths themselves rest on second-order codes (the first-order codes being those in which language consists)”” (*SSP* 287).

indication that her own power as observer has made her world “real” in some fashion which Leader perceives. In other words, Aomame’s will has impressed its force upon Leader’s understanding of the world.⁴³ In a similar manner, the earlier discussion of Professor Ebisuno’s dialog with Tengo about Orwell’s Big Brother reveals an awareness of the world’s subjectivity: “There’s no longer any place for a Big Brother in this real world of ours” (*1Q84* 236, my underlining). Professor Ebisuno recognizes the subjectivity of the world as perceived, including himself within the collective subjectivity. However, Professor Ebisuno is not susceptible to Aomame’s will exerted upon her perception of her world as “*1Q84*” in the way that Leader is. Ebisuno is a true *other*, with an independent will, and thus does not have privileged access to Aomame’s subjective world as Leader does.

Furthermore, Leader’s inability to provide further explanation is an interdiction⁴⁴ imposed upon him by his world. Reading Leader against the grain (*qua* Leader) in this way, Leader is not presented as analogous to Orwell’s Big Brother, with the power structure being the production of his own will. Rather, Leader is a *receiver*, an unassigned signified awaiting signification *qua* Leader. Leader recognizes that when some meanings are established when turned into words, some meanings are lost. Signification in language simultaneously creates and obscures meaning. The disentanglement of signifiers and signifieds is the expression of the benighted world before an individual will creates signs to stabilize its own ontological vertigo. Leader’s world is to him ambiguous, as he lacks the constructive force of will to make the signs necessary

⁴³ Or, one may wish to interpret Leader as Aomame’s own *tulpa* in this scene.

⁴⁴ After Derrida: “(and I am using this word deliberately)” (*SSP* 279). The interdiction prematurely terminates the signification before the erection of the transcendental signifier.

to give it any meaning. As a *receiver*, a signified, Leader lacks the power to perceive, to make signs and thus to produce specific meanings for himself. Leader as a receiver of signs, unable to make signs of his own, sees all signifiers as arbitrary, waiting to be joined together with a signified by some other will to make a sign resulting in unambiguous meaning. But of course, he must receive that meaning from outside his world, as he did with his understanding the world to be signified as *IQ84* by Aomame, when he was in dialog with her. By this logic, Leader would not know of the world being called *IQ84* if he had not been in contemporary dialog with her in order to receive that signification from her. Or, unlike Professor Ebisuno as a true *other* with an independent will, Leader may be some sort of a constructed or projected *other*, with his will at least partially derived from sources beyond his own being.

Out of time

The epigraph to this section (on page 74), appropriated from *SSP*, helps us recognize that we have come to the source of the myth of Big Brother, stating that “[t]he focus or the source of the myth are always shadows and virtualities which are elusive, unactualizable, and nonexistent in the first place” (*SSP* 286). The room where Aomame meets Leader is dark and mysterious, fitting for a reclusive religious cult leader. In this mythic realm, time is suspended:

Beneath her fingers, she could feel every muscle in the man’s body turning to stone and filling with an incredibly intense power. As if in response to that power, the marble clock rose slowly from the surface of the chest. She watched it begin to tremble, as if hesitating, come to rest at a point some three inches in the air, and stay there for a full ten seconds. Then the man’s muscles lost their strength, and the clock dropped back to the chest with a dull thud, as if it had just remembered the earth’s gravity. (*IQ84* 446)

Leader’s “body turning to stone” is similarly the ossification of his body from the

hegemonic force of Sakigake's collective will as a cult impressing upon him. (Just as Aomame's signification seemed to have impressed itself upon him.) It is as if the being of the cult, which needs a central leader around which to structure itself, was writing its being into stone on Fukada's body as its own palimpsest in its new context. It serves my interpretation to view the suspension of the marble clock as an allusion to a pre-Paleolithic epoch before writing, before signs, where time had not yet been recorded in language or stone. To do so, however, would also reveal a fissure in Murakami's text as I have interpreted it, exhibiting in Leader a form of will necessary to channel the collective will of the Sakigake cult for his own purposes (to demonstrate to Aomame). Of course, Leader could, in turn, counter by saying that the display of time-stopping power is merely the will of the cult itself. Whatever the case, Aomame feels the suspension of time twenty pages later, when "[t]ime seemed to come to a sudden halt. Aomame could find no words to speak. She went stiff from head to toe, waiting for time to begin to move once again." (1Q84 466). The bulk of her dialog with Leader occurs after the suspension of time.

Tengo, too, feels the suspension of time while on the train to see his dying father, he reads again the embedded story, *Town of Cats*. Hagiwara's *Town of Cats* presents an isolated village on the nervous edge of fascism, about to descend (as cats) upon it. Muakami's *Town of Cats*, on the other hand, portrays what may be that same village after fascism had taken root. There are no more people, only cats. The cats go about their days always the same, taking up the habits suggested by the abandoned structures in the vacant

town.⁴⁵ After days of witnessing this repetition, the traveler finds his means of escape, the train that had brought him there, no longer stops. Eventually, the cats smell him, though cats have poor sense of smell, and seeking to eradicate him because of his difference, trap him in the abandoned clock tower in the center of town. Here the traveler succumbs:

He knows that he is irretrievably lost. This is no town of cats, he finally realizes. It is the place where he is meant to be lost. It is a place not of this world that has been prepared especially for him. And never again, for all eternity, will the train stop at this station to bring him back to his original world. (*IQ84* 405)

Tengo's observation was that "[d]uring the day there was nothing but absolute loneliness, and with night came the cats' relentless searching, the cycle repeating itself with no apparent end" (*IQ84* 405). The traveler was himself, "suspended in time" as he hid in the clock town—alone in the day (without an interlocutor), while the ominous haunting of the cats at night press for the past (signified in the stopped clock) to repeat in the present. There was apparently nothing that would prevent the cycle from repeating.

Observing the repetitions of cause followed by an unambiguous effect creates patterns by which we understand our physical world. Primary causes are often attributed to the divine, as prime movers or personifications of primordial forces. Signifiers without specific signified, or broken signs, occur in a timeless world, as no observable effect marks the passage of time via cause and effect—the signification (the cause) creates no meaning (the effect).⁴⁶ Leader explains this confounding of cause and effect to Aomame:

“Cause and effect are linked that way in a twisted form. You can pile up all the worlds

⁴⁵ This is the metaphorical nature of Japan's *tsukumogami*, common objects that gain independent animation when left unattended too long (e.g. sandals, teapots, chests of drawers, etc.) Curiously, it seems that cats are the only animals that are sometimes included in the group of spirits known as *tsukumogami*.

⁴⁶ Winston Smith's writing was ineffectual as a cause within Orwell's world as it left no lasting effect.

you like and the twisting will never be undone” (IQ84 471). This point is made exactly four times, in close proximity to the epicenter of the text, as if the text itself is careening toward its own de-signification.

The worlds to which Leader refers are the endless repetitions that would inevitably result in a mythomorphic reality, where infinite permutations of events result in unending sameness. Mythologies the world over often describe their own gods as occupying infinite time and many are as monstrous to our finite sensibility as they are good. The inability to separate meaning, through the arbitrary determination of the sign, yields no meaning, producing an ambiguous conception of all things, including good and evil.

Both Leader and the traveler from *Town of Cats* are caught in a loop, a return to a past that results in an endless repetition. The force of this loop is the cultural inertia, the force of the past to press itself on the present, and thus turn the flow of time away from the differencing possibilities of the future. The past repeats. Repetition of culture, in this sense, can be seen as the primal urge for culture to cohere, creating a center around which culture revolves, unchanging. The fascist tendencies of the interwar period that embroiled much of central Europe and Japan emerged at the frightening destabilizing possibilities apprehended by individuals and “culture” at large, including an accelerating experience of the passage of time through mechanization. The response to this destabilizing anxiety was to return to a familiar, stabilizing nostalgic home of the past. Significant to my analysis is that the protagonist dyad, and particularly Fuka-Eri, had severed connections to their pasts, meaning that they have no appeal to archaeological authenticity by which to situate themselves in their present—Everything about their identities must be

resignified anew.

When myth became fact⁴⁷

The Little People, like the protagonists, lack specific identity or characterization, although many passages offer characterizations. Leader tells Aomame, “They have been called by many different names, but in most cases have not been called anything at all. They were simply there. The expression ‘Little People’ is just an expedient. My daughter called them that when she was very young and brought them with her” (*IQ84* 445). I have discussed already the ontological desire for coherence in the face of ontological vergito as the impetus for appropriation. Derrida makes a similar statement, “as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire” (*SSP* 279). Professor Ebisuno tells Tengo, “We can’t even tell whether they are good or evil, or whether they have any substance or not” (*IQ84* 236). Professor Ebisuno’s statement is the clearest textual evidence yet that we have already been in a world of concepts, or as I have suggested above, of signs, signifiers, and signifieds. Whether the Little People are good or bad is dependent upon their interpretation as signs. In a world of presignification, that is, before interpretation, such signification as good or evil is simply “yet to be determined.”

Previously, I suggested the idea that the Little People serve as Fuka-Eri’s *tulpas*—an idea made real by sheer force of will, or the veracity of an utterance, something quite akin to magic. In this sense, the Little People would be the indeterminate idea in demand of a McLuhanesque package into which it can become embodied. Given that the Little People are never alone, “Their numbers can sometimes increase and sometimes decrease,

⁴⁷ When “Myth is the mountain whence all the different streams arise which become truths down here in the valley” (from C.S. Lewis’ 1944 essay, “Myth Became Fact”).

but there is never just one” (*IQ84* 460), the Little People could be, in a world of signs, the bound interlocutors of language. They must exist in multiples, as language itself has arisen in discourse, and identity too, arises in and as language already in discourse. The exchange is both the means by and the stuff of the constitution of identity, as discussed above. If Beckett’s *Unnameable* was an exploration of being in the first-order signs of language, then the Little People would be the exploration of being in the second-order signs of myth. As the Little People can take any number of forms, and they are neither good nor bad, they therefore do not allude to any specific meaning or narrative, nevertheless they are bound in and constituted by narrative.

This discussion is still too abstract, even for a world of presignification. I am not suggesting that we are in Beckett’s *Unnameable* world, one constructed of first-order codes of language, but instead that we are in a mythomoporphic world of concepts. As concepts, they have yet to be made real in any specific myth, or given mythic attributes such as ethical relevance in a given social construct. For example, above I illustrated how Sakigake could be considered the concept of ‘cult,’ and that Leader could be the concept of the perceived organizing center of a structure (esp. of Sakigake as the concept of cult).

Signification itself is merely “expedient.” The cult member, who is given only a characterization as a name, “Buzzcut,” refers to the Sakigake cult: “‘Things like precepts and doctrines are, ultimately, just expedients. The important thing is not the frame itself but what is inside the frame.’ ‘And your Leader provides the content to fill the frame.’ ‘Exactly. He can hear the voices that we cannot hear’” (*IQ84* 487). Whereas Leader earlier identified the name “Little People” as merely expedient, the member of the cult reciprocally calls the characteristic of the cult merely expedient, and by extension,

Leader as well, being merely the filler for a “frame” as signifier. Admitting the members’ inability to think for themselves is akin to their having been infected by the viral ideological narrative of the Little People. In other words, Fuka-Eri’s *Air Chrysalis* myth has become fact in the minds of the cult members, who are merely expedient hosts for the ontological desire of the myth to be manifest as real.

I also previously argued that Fuka-Eri could be considered a “myth” that must always be interpreted, given that specific referents to her identity had been expunged through her isolations as evidenced even in her appropriated name. Here, now with the lexicon of second-order mythomorphic codes, I would like to redefine the prior assertion that Fuka-Eri be considered the concept of “mythmaker.” Fuka-Eri is not an author in that she does not make a specific myth and stand separate from it, but she is constituted in the concept “mythopoeia.” And once again, continuing with the logic of dependent origination, Fuka-Eri could be seen as the concept of mythmaker arising along with the concept of mythopoeia, her story *Air Chrysalis* as concept of the “myth” that is made. (The poem makes the poet just as the poet makes the poem.) Above, the contested authorship revealed that all authorship was already the result of appropriation of the past as that which *has-been-handed-down*. In the terms of mythomorphic discourse, the myth of mythopoeia that is “*Air Chrysalis*” is merely an expedient term for the process of appropriating heritage to make it anew. She speaks the myth⁴⁸ out of the past as folklore, and in the process, she speaks herself.

Once again we observe the multivalence of meanings in the mythomorphic world, with terms being merely expedient, without specific signification. With the discursive

⁴⁸ Fuka-Eri has memorized large passages of *Konjaku Monogatari*, *Heike Monogatari*, Bach, etc...)

nature of myth as discussed above, myth requires an interlocutor. The interlocutor must also co-arise with the mythmaker and the myth in discourse, thus Fuka-Eri and the Little People together weave the myth *Air Chrysalis*. Leader says, “We don’t know if the so-called Little People are good or evil.... We have lived with them since long, long ago—from a time before good and evil even existed, when people’s minds were still benighted” (IQ84 464). As the co-arisen interlocutor for the individual over many generations, the Little People can be understood as an expedient term for the personification of cultural inertia, both using the myth to manifest themselves in the world. Yet, here again we see the differentiation that must occur in dependent origination: in the same way that the individual possesses the ontological desire to cohere, expressed as individuality or the force of free will; The Little People bear an equal ontological desire for culture to cohere in its collectivity, expressed as cultural inertia or fate. Such co-arisings are also signified in Fuka-Eri as a *Perceiver* and Fukada *qua* Leader as a *Receiver* of the myths made.

Mythomorphic discourse is thus fraught with multiple valences, multiple potential significations, and even multiple axes of the same. All of these concepts are simultaneously present in myth, as it exists in a time of predetermined, not predestined, signification: a time out of time, as in the etiological myth about the time before Chronos castrated his father Uranos for swallowing his own offspring, and thereby initiating fecund the succession of the gods.

When the expedient signification of etiological myths is interpreted as archaeologically authentic signs, an assumption of metaphysical originality is assumed.

the determination of being as presence in all the senses of this word. It would be possible to show that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the I center have always designated the constant of a presence-eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia [truth],

transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth.
(SSP 279)

Derrida's treatment of these concepts reveals the slippery implications of structurality: An apprehended structure with a "center of gravity" only seems to control the structure from the center, although it is merely an imposition of the observer to demand that the apprehended center of gravity is in fact the controlling center of the structure. Similarly, the structurality of an etiological myth only seems to demand a metaphysical originality because its interpretedness has been forgotten, resulting in myth becoming fact, mythos becoming truth.

Ambiguity in myth: neither good nor evil, true nor false

If epistemic discourse is concerned with evidence of factuality and ethical discourse may be concerned primarily with judgments of good or evil, mythomorphic discourse would fall in neither domain, but a discourse of the potentialities of both. Myth is neither true nor false, good nor evil, but emerges from the mythomorphic world of ontological desires personified. As these desires accumulate signification by taking on forms in story, these desires co-arise with their contexts. In this specific dialog, I have suggested that the ontological desire for individual coherence as free will must co-arise with the ontological desire for cultural coherence as fate, for both constitute each other. Free will is only experienced as the force that resists Fate, and visa-versa. Both of these ontological forces co-arise in the mythomorphic discourse of *Air Chrysalis* as the myth about mythmaking.

Fuka-Eri's participation in the weaving of *Air Chrysalis* is a narrative of the mythmaker, the individual who projects their personal narrative in order to emerge with it

into the world. Arising at the same time is the narrative of the undifferentiated collective, which as structure, projects the need for a homogenous signification that asserts a presence, an organizing center, an etiology around which to structure their culture. This is the force of fate that traps Fukada as an agent of the Little People, becoming the central figure of the cult. Interpreting their myth with an archaeological authenticity, as unchanging through time, Fukada is robbed of his independent will, which is replaced by the collective will of the Little People, in the way a virus takes over the organizing narrative of a cell's DNA, dragging him into a reclusive world that he had not anticipated. Fukada lives in a world of endless sameness, dictated by the recurring past of the cult. As unchanging, it is as if his will and his body are both turning to stone, a sign of perceived archaeological authenticity.

Whether the Little People as cultural inertia are good or evil can only be determined by the way in which they are (or simply are not) appropriated in the present context (i.e., made real in a specific, nonmythomorphic discourse). As choosing selects a possibility, even if from a limited set of possibilities in a given context, then choosing is the act of posing a question of possibility and determining which possibility. Already I have argued that "the question of the question" is the assertion of free will, where the prerogative of a specific will arises in language manifest by formulating a question that presents choices for signification. The making of a sign collapses the possible significations into a specific signification, which is to determine what meaning will be taken from the choices made possible by the question. Such a will is a very small force, simply taking a thing to mean something. It is nearly imperceptible and more often than not an unconscious act. However, when magnified by the collective power of the masses

of Little People who are influenced by that same meaning (because the Little People make no signs of their own, but depend upon the Leader to do this for them), the once small force induces a tipping point, producing great cascading phenomena upon the context. This is also the moment that the mythomorphic past is adopted as epistemic past, resulting in a loss of understanding that myth, as the apprehended object, is itself the result of ambiguous, arbitrary sign making.

A word, a sign, a symbol, a narrative, a mythos are all passed on through culture as collective *dasein* as folklore—narratives that, when shared, give a sense of cohesion and unity. However, when that coherence lacks any differentiation, it loses its individual vitality, its life force that gave it birth in the first place. In the way that Uranos suspended time, personified as his son Chronos, by consuming his own offspring, a sterile culture consumes its own, or prevents the offspring from emerging altogether as individually differentiated from their heritage by cloning the narrative. The result is stopping culture's forward motion, an Eternal Return of sameness, a fascist culture.

The power of the Little People, whether it be manifest as good or evil, is only determined in the manner of appropriation by Heidegger's *ordinary dasein*. Their great power is experienced in the need for culture to cohere, to be homogenous, and to repeat itself through the individuals. Failure to become one's own mythmaker is a failure to appropriate culture for one's self, leaving the myth as Little People in control of the individual results in *inauthentic dasein*. If, however, cultural inertia is deflected, by even the smallest force (symbolized by Aomame's special ice pick), that is known as appropriation or the making of signs, that heritage will be altered, differentiated, and handed down in turn, resulting in *authentic dasein*.

Power and passivity at the center

Through the insubstantial nature of the Little People, along with Leader's own invocation of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and understanding the world of *IQ84* as mythomorphic, we come to recognize that all the apparent "reality" and characters are always concepts and portrayals of ideas already in discourse with one another. The concepts of fate (as cultural inertia or archaeological authenticity) and free will (individuality or interpreted authenticity) are personified, respectively, as the Little People and Fuka-Eri. Frazer's comparative study of magic and mythology invites nondivine interpretations of Christianity and its teleological mythology. Leader notes that when someone emerges *qua* Leader (a.k.a. Big Brother, King, Emperor) and is retained for too long (esp. becoming hereditary), the Little People themselves stop hearing the voices of the gods (interpreting for the sake of their own individuality). Their own thinking is stifled by the interdiction of the center and questions that invite possibility are banished, thus change becomes impossible and time stops, or swallows itself. This would mark the beginning of an extreme ideology, when all of the "listening to the voices" is voluntarily given up to a leader, thus becoming the crafters and enslavers of their very own Big Brother, a man forced to become Leader against his will:

We do not know if the so-called Little People are good or evil. [...] In my case, when I became an 'agent' of the so-called Little People, my daughter became something like an agent for those forces opposed to the Little People. In this way, the balance was maintained.[...] The Little People emerged from the darkness at some point, coming here through her, and they made me their agent. My daughter became a *Perceiver* and I became a *Receiver*. Apparently we were suited to such roles by nature. In any case, they found us. We did not find them. (*IQ84* 464)

The balance maintained may be understood as the multivalent co-arising as described above. When Fuka-Eri emerged from her confinement in the shed with the dead blind goat, she brought with her a new mythos in *Air Chrysalis*, which must have filled the

vacuum within Sakigake, which had neither scripture, nor etiological foundation. This mythos differentiated Sakigake, making it a unique cultural organism, with a narrative around which it could organize and differentiate itself as a unique culture in the world of cultures. In McLuhanesque terms, echoing the earlier observation about the cult lacking any message, Fuka-Eri's *Air Chrysalis* was adopted as the message that the medium lacked. At the same time then, her father must have co-arisen, following the apprehended coherence through the chain of signifiers, to become the personification of the center, the Leader. Failing to maintain the awareness of the myth as interpreted, the culture (which fosters growth and differentiation) instead became a cult (which consumes its own, unchanging ideology).

Professor Ebisuno, a close friend of Fukada before he became Leader, noted that the cult, like a virus, had overtaken Fukada's original intentions for Sakigake and supplanted its own collective agenda. Ebisuno explained to Tengo early on that, "people placed him [Fukada] at the center of the group as a matter of course, and they followed his judgment" (*IQ84* 122).⁴⁹ From the information Murakami gives us, it seems that Fukada did not seek to organize a group centered around himself, as the group he aimed to create was to "reject the idea of a personality cult, and they practice collective leadership,"⁵⁰ until much later the group became "highly cohesive and obsessed with

⁴⁹ Note the page spread of these two points: 300 pages of memory are required to confirm the interpretation of this point, that Leader is a product of a social construct, all the while the overt narrative alludes to the idea that Leader is himself an aggressive, ambitious, charismatic, incestuous cult figure.

⁵⁰ The contrast between "collective leadership" and "personality cult" reflects the nature of the independent democracy of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period and the "Leader cult" of the country's first president, Tomáš Masaryk. "The Masaryk cult, like the Castle's version of the "Czechoslovak" national myth, was a useful political tool both at home and abroad. Public devotion to Masaryk strengthened his political position—and that of the Castle—particularly against the leading Czech political parties. Abroad, the cult situated Masaryk as the quintessential representative of his state and the values it supposedly manifested, such as a love of liberty, dedication to truth and justice, and adherence to Wilsonian (footnote cont.)

secrecy” (IQ84 234). Fukada’s position as Leader is portrayed not as the result of his own independent ambition, but demanded by the ontological desire of the group to cohere as its own entity, as distinct from other groups through its possessing a message, thus becoming a cult. Again, Prof. Ebisuno:

“I’m sure that, at some point, a kind of realignment occurred in Sakigake’s organization. What it consisted of, I don’t know. But because of it, Sakigake underwent a major change of direction from agricultural commune to religion. I imagine that something like a coup d’état occurred at that point, and Fukada was swept up in it. As I said before, Fukada was a man without the slightest religious inclinations. He must have poured every ounce of his strength into trying to put a stop to such a development. And probably he lost the battle for supremacy in Sakigake at that time.” (IQ84 235)

The chronology of events places the change in Sakigake as occurring just after the emergence of Fuka-Eri’s story, *Air Chrysalis*, but before its transformation into a religious cult. It is apparent from Murakami’s consistent attention to the emergence of Fukada as Leader through each of the character’s portrayals, that Fuka-Eri’s father became Leader against his will. The realignment mentioned is that moment when the myth represented in *Air Chrysalis* became fact in the cult.

As a concept, Fukada *qua* Leader succumbs to the cultural inertia personified in the Little People—their power to oppress one’s will evidenced even in one as strong as Fukada. Murakami offers no further hint at a particular weakness of Fukada’s that might have resulted in the realignment of the group he founded into a cult centered around him as Leader. It could simply be that a latent desire for power awakened or strengthened by the members’ submitting their will to Fukada as Leader. Leader explains: “They have

democratic ideals. His international reputation in turn greatly strengthened his position at home. Many historians have noted the cult’s existence, but less is known about its creation and propagation” (Orzoff 121). Mazaryk stepped down from the presidency voluntarily in 1935, the same year Hagiwara’s *Town of Cats* was published in Japan, portraying the arrival of fascism in a small, unnamed central European town. Mazaryk was succeeded by Edvard Beneš, who helped to found the young democratic republic. Beneš went into exile when the government fell in 1938 to the fascists within and the Nazis without.

granted me these special powers, but in return they have impressed certain demands upon me. Their desires have become my desires—implacable desires that I have been unable to defy” (1Q84 445). Though we are told that the cult grew beyond his intentions and his attempts to resist were futile, just how involved Leader was in the initiation of the crimes committed by the cult remains in shadows.

Earlier I discussed Donkel’s understanding of passivity being the result of language itself acting on the being, “This means that man’s role as a linguistic being is basically one of passive receptivity to what comes to presence in and through language itself” (Donkel 69). From this point of view, Fukada’s position *qua Leader* is the result of the language of “Leader” being used on him. The cult’s members have submitted their will to Fukada through the use of the language of Leader, which is received as passively by Fukada *qua Leader*. That is just a contorted way of saying simplistically that Fukada becomes Leader by the members of the cult naming him so. At the same time, Fukada’s will becomes compromised as it becomes entangled in the collective will of the members. The embodied physical power of the man that Aomame noted in the center of the book is the power of the language of *Leader*, acting upon the body of the man, Fukada. In Heideggerian terms, Fukada’s body is appropriated by the cult in language as *Leader*. Derrida can help us understand the paradox of Leader being the head of the group he organized, yet wielding none of the power for himself:

[C]lassical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its center elsewhere. The center is not the center. (SSP 279)

Fukada is not the center, being outside the totality of the cult’s power because he has no individual will to direct its force, and yet *qua Leader*, he is the center, the focal point of

the cult's collective power. He has lost control of his body and his own will, and governs the cult only inasmuch as he has been appropriated as the conceptual focal point of the cult's apprehended structural coherence.

Illustrating the above, Aomame asks whether he has any feeling when paralysis overcomes him and the young girls are brought to him:

None at all, [...] no sexual desire either. I just harden up like a rock, the way my muscles do... *This is very difficult for me to talk about*, and you probably don't want to hear about it either, but may I tell you a bit more?... During this... interval, it happens that I am physically joined with girls... Whenever I go into my paralytic state,⁵¹ they take turns mounting me and having sexual relations with me. I have no feeling at all. I feel no sexual pleasure. But I do ejaculate⁵²... It is thought that these paralyzes of mine are a form of grace bestowed by heaven, a kind of sacred state. Thus, when I am visited by those states, the girls come to me and join their bodies with mine. They are trying to become impregnated. With my heir. (*IQ84 421* my italics and underlining)

Notwithstanding the difficulty of this passage, there is much to be gained from close examination. Firstly, Leader describes his experience as a passive involvement. He is neither the initiator, nor the beneficiary of the sexual relations. I have underlined all of the passive voice to show that every instance of the portrayal of Leader's involvement is passive, indicating that the will to act is external to Fukada himself. Aomame remains unable to find out who, specifically, is responsible because there is no one specific person responsible for this crime. It is a crime committed on a cultural scale, collectively by the members of the cult forcing their collective wills upon the individuals in the way that rape denies the victim of their own will to choose the actions of their own bodies.

Secondly, the fabula of the narrative places Fuka-Eri's experience in the shed with the blind dead goat as the precipitating event, preceding the trauma of the incest

⁵¹ First-person passive voice in Japanese: 「動けなくなったわたしの」 lit. "I, as having become unable to move,..."

⁵² Third-person passive voice in Japanese: 「射精はある」 lit. "there is ejaculation."

scene, making the telling of her myth the impetus for *IQ84*. That is to say that *IQ84* begins with the creation of a myth which identifies the Little People as morally ambiguous, neither essentially good nor evil, but wielding great power. As taken up by the members of Sakigake, the myth serves to create a unique and unified identity for the movement, transforming it into mystery cult. Fukada is thereby pressed to fulfill the demand of the cult to assert its feigned archaeological authenticity, thus he *is made to be* the cult leader, apparently against his will. Fukada therefore did not *speak himself* as Fuka-Eri did, but is passively spoken *qua* Leader, by a will not his own. All individual will and identification as individuals is lost, erased under the totalizing force of the collective identity. The individuals have thus become interchangeable, fungible signs in a system of signification that only recognizes “Members” and “Leaders,” their bodies and desires taken over by the viral myth that has supplanted their minds with its own ontological desire.

In this way, the determination of morality is not purported to be an attribute of the myth itself, but a product of interpreting the myth into a context, or embodying the myth. If the idea of myth is the ontological desire for identity coherence, as I have presented it, then even the concept of coherence is morally ambiguous. It could yield good or evil results, depending on the application of the concept and the interpretation of the results. The myth itself cannot be evil, as it is merely a concept. Good or Evil are aspects of concepts made real as interpreted. The *gesture* here as I have interpreted it resonates with Heidegger’s history as it *has-been-handed-down*, which asserts that *authentic dasein* must be deliberate in its interpretation of the world.

Leader has retained only a limited memory of himself before the cult usurped his

individual will. The italicized passage notes that although his involvement has been passive, having been forced upon him without his ability to resist, he does exhibit a sense of shame, though he denies guilt:

“You have raped many young girls—girls barely ten years old, some perhaps even younger.” “That is true,” the man said. “There are aspects to what I did, I must admit, that can be viewed that way in the light of commonly held concepts. In the eyes of earthly law, I am a criminal. I did have physical relations with girls who had still not reached maturity—*even if it was something that I myself did not seek.*” (1Q84 446, my italics and underlining)

Leader’s strange, detached memory of the events does not deny the physical act, but reiterates that they were not the result of his own will, even though he exhibits some concept of shame for them. Only Aomame, as assassin, is able to offer relief for him, and perhaps, some relief from others suffering under the oppression of the Sakigake cult. According to Leader, only his destruction can compensate for the overgrown influence of the Little People and restore a measure of balance between good and evil—even if only for a time. Although he was compelled by others to engage in horrible physical acts as Leader, the vestigial individual will of Fukada admits his culpability and inability to extricate himself from the power of the Little People, the cultural inertia that has overtaken his free will. For this, Fukada willingly surrenders his life.

The repression and representation of physical and cultural incest

Rape and especially incest are very difficult subjects to broach in any context, even in a work of fiction. The taboo nature frequently causes victims to continue to suffer under social repression that denies them closure. Above I have attempted to make a case for the linguistic nature of this scene, as being both a discussion of presignification and one of passive involvement by Leader. Even so, I am aware of my own limited ability to

offer adequate sensitivity to the delicate nature of this subject. Thus, with an upfront appeal for understanding of my own inadequacy, I will attempt to address what I understand to be Leader's use of the term, "congress," in *1Q84*, a world of detached significations, and recognizing this to be a clumsy way to signify a similarly abhorrent cultural phenomena, which I will call, "cultural incest."

The retribution for misogyny, rape, and incest has been the motive for Aomame's narrative for some 400 pages. The dowager at Willow House contracted with Aomame to kill men who had beat women, and the rape and incest in the Sakigake cult is the reason Aomame has come to kill Leader. Nevertheless, the abrupt nature of this critical juncture, where time has stopped, remains disturbingly emotionally detached. As I have interpreted and followed the logic above, there may be a linguistic basis for such detachment of this scene as dealing with pure concepts.

I had congress with her... That expression is closer to the truth. And the one I had congress with was, strictly speaking, my daughter as a concept. 'To have congress with' is an ambiguous term. The essential point was for us to become one—as Perceiver and Receiver. Apparently we were suited to such roles by nature. In any case, *they* found *us*. We did not find them. (*1Q84* 465)

Following the above discussion of passivity, I recognize the linguistic basis Leader uses for "daughter" being a concept resulting from signification, and "to have congress with" can be a similarly ambiguous term that describes only the physical aspect of the act, while leaving the emotional or willful aspect unaddressed. Nevertheless, Leader's apparent dismissal of the rape of his daughter as "strictly speaking, a concept," is troubling at least, in the way Schulz so detested Murakami's treatment of this subject. After all the invocations of Dostoevsky by Leader and by Murakami in interviews setting up Dostoevsky as a literary model, a reader may wish to read this with a bit of a philosophical detachment. The gravity of the situation that is presented in Aomame's

outrage notwithstanding, the emotional and ethical impassivity of Leader is troubling, even in a mythomorphic discourse. Indeed, Dostoevsky's characters struggle with their own vile natures, while Leader's confrontation with his own actions, requiring the prodding of Aomame, are delivered with only the slightest hint of remorse, and are even worse, completely devoid of ethical wrangling of any sort.

Being forced by the text to accept the problematic portrayal of this scene as metaphor, I must swallow the insensitivity to the treatment of the topic to examine it a bit further. I have already addressed the linguistic signification that may be relevant to the phrase, "daughter as a concept." The phrase at the heart of this indelicate treatment of a critical point is "to have congress with." Firstly, translator Jay Rubin's rendering of the Japanese verb 「交わる」 as "congress," is perfectly reasonable. In both languages, the word refers to simply "coming together" on more or less equal terms. It denotes especially mixing in general, including uses for intersections, mathematical unions, as well as connotations for sexual intercourse. The Japanese use includes what is rendered in English as communion with Christ, a ceremony incurring forgiveness and divine condescension to establish equality between the parties to enable a coming together.

Using the term "congress" in this way would seem to deprive the sexual relations between father and daughter of the connotations normally associated with rape and incest. However, it would be a gross mistake of false binaries to suggest that Leader's use of the term and its implications implied *mutually consensual sex*. Such a suggestion is neither offered elsewhere in the text, nor implied by the term, *congress*. Very close attention to the language, including the passive voice of the verbs noted in the previous section reveals that, far from being mutually consensual, *neither* Fuka-Eri *nor* Leader

were able to give consent of their actions. According to Leader's account of events, being in a trance-like paralytic state, Leader was also unable to prevent or even signal his *nonconsent*, and he suggests the girls, as adolescents, must have been physically and psychologically coerced by some power outside his own to act as "shrine maidens."

If all parties physically involved are unable give consent of their actions, then all are victims of rape—with the perpetrator to this heinous act remaining in the shadows, orchestrating the activity that others are compelled to carry out against their will. Murakami fails to draw out the significance of this problem that he is, nevertheless, intimating throughout the text. Perhaps his is simply too indirect, leaving even the question veiled when the question, at least, should be drawn out more clearly.

What lives in the shadows, but has sufficient power to cause this degree of widespread participation in one of the greatest atrocities among all human cultures? Extreme ideologies, such as those found in cults, fascism and dictatorships, have the power to strip people of their individual will, depriving them of the ability to give consent and making them vulnerable to committing actions that they would not otherwise willfully choose to do themselves. These ideologies propagate themselves, as cultural inertia, through narratives we might recognize as myth. Myth, I have argued above, itself is neither good nor bad, but as *when interpreted as real*, as if having archaeological authenticity, then reality is no longer perceivable as real. These mythologies become extreme and exhibit the traits observed in Murakami's portrayal of the Sakigake cult, (and other cults) with the Little People as the personification of cultural inertia, reproducing themselves as culture in narrative as myth.

After their emergence into the world of *IQ84* as myth in Fuka-Eri's story *Air*

Chrysalis, the Little People seized the members of Sakigake, who in turn made Leader their unwilling figurehead (we could speculate that Fukada may have succumbed to some psychological oppression himself, such as that which the girls are portrayed to have suffered). The cult begins to gain its own awareness in the collective identity of *ordinary dasein*, and which, as a collective cultural *dasein*, weaves the center of its own home out of the same narrative threads that Fuka-Eri used to make her *Air Chrysalis*, placing Fukada at the top. Little People are never alone, meaning that the myth as that which *has-been-handed-down* is multiplied without variation through appropriation, the individual power becomes collective force, enough to alter the course of event on a global scale.

Both physical incest and cultural incest are carried out in darkness, shadows, or at least often remain unseen and undisclosed, lending to a secrecy and repression that isolates the individual, or community, further from its peers. Physical incest has a clear perpetrator (parent) and victim (child), making the determination of good and evil an unambiguous task. Although incest may be unprosecuted in a tragically large number of cases and the shame associated causes its own lasting harm, the anger has a clear target, and hope for closure through prosecution of the perpetrator is at least possible.

Cultural incest, however, occurs between generations of culture, which is itself many individuals. The diffuse yet pervasive nature of cultural incest makes affixing meaning to it, by way of identifying the specific perpetrators and holding them accountable, is nearly impossible. With the culpability for cultural incest dispersed into a diffuse conceptual body only provisionally embodied in individuals as members, closure through justice and catharsis is elusive. Without a perpetrator, there is little hope for eventual closure, causing the suffering to continue, even repeat, always in shadows.

I have attempted to address the conceptual framework of this difficult scene in order to bring out of the dark the elusive concept of cultural incest through a misappropriation of myth or heritage as possessing archaeological authenticity. I have construed an argument of cultural incest here with a Derridean displacement and deferral of the culpability for the rape to cultural inertia. However, the brevity and detachment of this critical scene not only dismisses the real severity, pain, and significance of physical rape and incest, it also undermines the potential emotive force of the metaphor.

Many questions can be put to the text of this scene. It may be concluded from Murakami's text that Leader did not orchestrate the rape of the three young girls and that he is also a victim. Nevertheless, Murakami fails to give Leader more than passing expression of the possible grief or acknowledgement of suffering one would expect at the moment of seeking absolution—for the suffering of the young girls, his own daughter, or even himself. It is hard to read Leader's detachment here as necessary for a philosophical argument as much as a jarring failure to understand and integrate the demands of character as an emotive literary device with philosophical narrative exigency.

Alternatively, I have already suggested that one may wish to argue that Leader's apparent indifference to the physical nature of the situation is due to Murakami's world itself being entirely fake, a world of concepts since the first page signified in the epigraph. Even so, concepts *qua* concepts gain their veracity and efficacy through the depth and texture of their construction and the sensitivity of their language. One may also choose to interpret this scene with a deep empathy for Leader's total emotional detachment as the result of complete psychic dissociation, given the severity of the act and his sense of shame.

Murakami's own literary idols (e.g., Dostoevsky, Chekhov) have shown that concepts can

also convey emotion, even strongly ambivalent emotion regarding good and evil.

Aomame does express considerable outrage regarding incest and the rape of young girls, and never fully accepts Leader's explanation. She has lingering suspicion that Leader may simply be a monster, even as she gains some sensitivity to his suffering under the force of the cult that has overtaken his own will. Nevertheless, the apparent ethical impassivity regarding this crucial and sensitive scene invites many troubling questions of its own.

Difficulties with the portrayal of this important scene notwithstanding, I must return to Leader's drawn out philosophical wrangling. Aomame reluctantly begins to process Leader's complex argument:

“By violating your daughter, conceptually and ambiguously, you became an agent of the Little People. But simultaneously, your daughter compensated by leaving you and becoming, as it were, an opponent of the Little People. Is this what you are asserting?” “That is correct. And in order to do so, she had to leave her own *dohta* behind.” (1Q84 465)

The above passage implies that Fuka-Eri's split into *Maza* and *dohta* occurred at the moment of the Little People's violation of her autonomy, sometime after their appearance in the shed. As I suggested above, both Fukada (as Leader) and Eriko (as Fuka-Eri) seem to exhibit a traumatic response, distancing themselves from the abhorrent memory of the incest. Ultimately, Leader feels his only recourse for absolution and escape from the power the Little People hold over him is to request his own death. The above interpretation of Leader and his complicated role in the rape and incest within the cult could explain Aomame's conditional compassion for Leader, while still feeling revulsion toward him. Her own debate is whether she can also choose to kill him for his crimes as a simultaneous act of compassion.

Finally, as one of many possible extra-textual allusions to this difficult scene, I

see some parallel to Japan's Emperor Hirohito, who as Emperor witnessed terrible atrocities against and by his own people committed in his name and then had to remove himself from a position of "divine authority."⁵³ *The New York Times* published an editorial tribute to Emperor Hirohito, on the day of his death, noting that "He asked his people to reject the 'false conception that the Emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races.' He then said to his wife: 'Do you see any difference? Do I look more human to you now?'" ("Hirohito"). As Emperor Hirohito himself demonstrates in contrast, perhaps Murakami's characterization of Leader as a concept, being obscured by an overabundance of metaphor and philosophy, lacks the potential for a humanizing portrayal of leaders, even as pawns swept away in an overwhelming cultural inertia.

Forgiveness and freedom

For her part, Fuka-Eri is does not speak of the incest scene, as we might expect from one who has suffered such a traumatic event and repressed or dissociated themselves from the memory of the event. We may gain insight into the portrayal of her response and her psychological accommodation of the traumatic event in other ways. Her strange language "without a question mark"⁵⁴ is a persistent symbol of the idea that her individual will has been stripped from her through the incest, both physical and culturally. The Fuka-Eri throughout the text is only her *maza*, her physical self having

⁵³ "Historians and the Japanese people themselves disagree about the precise details of Hirohito's wartime role. Some argue that he actively supported his country's fateful alliance with Germany in 1940. Others say he was disturbed by the course of events yet possessed neither the training nor personality to resist the collective wishes of his ministers and military advisers." ("Hirohito")

⁵⁴ "without a question mark" appears 13 times as a way of noting that Fuka-Eri's language has been injured, by her isolation within the Sakigake cult.

been liberated from the physical confines of the cult. Her intellectual self, her *dohta*, is the source of her free will and her memories, and is thus left behind, as it were, her mind still under the influence of her traumatic cult experience.

In response to Tengo's question about her favorite music, Fuka-Eri breaks into recitation, in German, of the aria of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* (BWV 244).

Murakami offers no translation, either of the Japanese and the English texts, (and presumably others) requiring primary interpretation, for all but German readers:

Buß und Reu	Guilt and pain
Knirscht das Sündenherz entzwei,	Break the sinful heart in twain,
Daß die Tropfen meiner Zähren	So the teardrops of my weeping
Angenehme Spezerei,	A most soothing precious balm,
Treuer Jesu, dir gebären..	Beloved Jesus, thee doth offer. ⁵⁵

Bach's religious masterpiece, a lament at the death of Jesus, the central figure of the Christian faith, also addresses the role of the believers for whose sins Jesus dies. The relationship to the Leader and his followers now becomes clearer, especially in that the Leader appears at the behest of the followers. The Leader is led by the Little People in the way that the apparition of a structural center follows the apprehension of the structure. When the followers become overly dependent (in this sense, by their own sins) upon the central leader, he must be removed from that structure, as in Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. The center cannot hold, the structure has become unbalanced,⁵⁶ and the Little People cannot hear the voices.⁵⁷ The dependency on the leader, which turns the mere apprehension of the center to the apprehension of it as factual, a conflation of "center of gravity" and "structural center" is the *ereignis* of evil in Murakami's world, a world that

⁵⁵ Translation from http://www.gbt.org/music/St_Matthew_text.pdf. Web. 01 May. 2011

⁵⁶ Appropriating Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*.

⁵⁷ Appropriating William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), from the poem, "The Second Coming": "The falcon cannot hear the falconer;/Things fall apart;/the centre cannot hold."

requires balance between good and evil.

Furthermore, the aria's overall message is one of forgiveness, in the Christian sense, which accepts the ignorance or benightedness of the followers and whose dependency on the Jesus as Christ has demanded his sacrifice. It would be a contortion to suggest Leader is a Christ figure here, with similar implications for salvation in the sacrifice—he is merely the similarly central figure, a social structure, religious or otherwise. Murakami does, however, seem to be highlighting the necessity of forgiveness as a particular type of accommodation or an appropriation of the past, rather than repayment or retribution, resulting in an endless repetition of it. Fuka-Eri's affinities are toward a history that is accepted only with modification, an appropriated history which produces a *bricolage* for her immediate *ereignis*, along with a compassionate forgiveness of the individual and cultural sins of the past. All are brought out of shadows into the light of present, as fragments of folklore with an awareness and acceptance of its own limits. Fuka-Eri manages to accept the atrocities of her own past, not her own commission but even the incestuous *congress* with her father, with the appropriative provisions allowed by forgiveness. Fuka-Eri's readiness with forgiveness suggests that, like her father, she was aware of the physical act that occurred against her will, and against his too. Forgiveness, as her experience is conveyed only through appropriations of Bach, gives new gravity to her own story, *Air Chrysalis*, as something that already has a past, and yet hearkens to a new potential without the past recurring.

Fuka-Eri's forgiveness freed her to orient herself in her present, and gains new faculty with the very act that freed her—ontic writing. While in hiding after the release of *Air Chrysalis* to the public, Fuka-Eri read Tengo's completed the rewrite of *Air Chrysalis*,

and recorded an audio message for Tengo on a cassette tape he found in the mailbox:

“His name had been written with a ballpoint pen in the middle of the front in small, stiff characters that might have been scratched into dry clay with a nail—Fuka-Eri’s writing, without question” (*IQ84* 297). Fuka-Eri had gained writing, albeit crude. Using a tape recorder, she was able to continue her own “writing” alone, with an anticipation of a future interlocutor, by sending her message to Tengo in the mail.

They don’t leave records. I’m the same. Once it gets written down, the story is not mine anymore. You did a good job of writing my story. I don’t think anybody else could do that. But it’s not my story anymore. But don’t worry. It’s not your fault. I’m just walking in a place away from the road. (*IQ84* 299)

The transcript shows Fuka-Eri already orienting herself as *authentic dasein*, as distinct from her past and anticipating a futurity. Eriko Fukada actively “spoke herself” into being Fuka-Eri through her story, *Air Chrysalis*, as an act of her free will expressed in ontic writing. In contrast, her father “was spoken” into being Leader, passively written into stone by his fate.

INTERLUDE IV

Dasein's Ownness and being "free for death"

Heidegger's conception of how the awareness (as an embrace of) of ones' own certain death alters *dasein's* being is pivotal to his entire project. As I perceive this to similarly be the case in *IQ84*, I will quote Heidegger at some length.

The more authentically *dasein* resolves itself, that is, understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost eminent possibility in anticipating death, the more unequivocal and inevitable is the choice in finding the possibility of its existence. Only the anticipation of death drives every chance and "preliminary" possibility out. Only being free *for* death gives *dasein* its absolute goal and knocks existence into its finitude. The finitude of existence thus seized upon tears one back out of endless multiplicity of possibilities offering themselves nearest by—those of comfort, shirking and taking things easy—and brings *dasein* to the simplicity of its *fate*. This is how we designate the primordial occurrence of *dasein* that lies in authentic resoluteness in which it *hands itself down* to itself, free for death, in a possibility that it inherited and yet has chosen. (BT 384)

Heidegger asserts that awareness and embracing death with resoluteness, then, is constitutive of *dasein*, and which simultaneously gives *dasein* its presence in its own present by facing an absolute futurity—that is, a futurity in which *dasein* is not. *Dasein's* death presents to *dasein* a world other than the present world to which *dasein* belongs, and like the world of *dasein's* heritage, this world is not immediately accessible to *dasein* except through a form of appropriation. Similar to appropriation, by which *dasein* transforms objects *present-at-hand* into objects *ready-to-hand* in the present world, *dasein's* access to the world of the future, its own futurity, is achieved through questions of possibility. Questions identify the emptiness of the as-yet-to-be, but fill that emptiness

with multiple possibilities that may emerge out of the finitude of *dasein*'s present world.

Authentic and inauthentic dasein

Ownness is interacting with the past through appropriation (rather than repetition) and being toward death, as futurity, with questions of possibility are what together enable *dasein* to “move” as it were, from the world of *ordinary dasein* into the world of *authentic dasein*. This moving into the new authentic world is a transformation of the world of *dasein* itself, for *dasein* transformed by the appropriation and questions of possibility is now in a world with such an *authentic dasein*—and *authentic dasein* is aware of this.

Ordinary dasein is “benighted,” (to link this with Murakami’s term) in a state before awareness of the appropriation available to it, and of the possibility of the question toward its futurity. Benighted, *Ordinary dasein* has no free will, because it is unaware of the free will available to it (exercise of free will is dependent upon awareness of free will as such).

Authentic dasein is that *ordinary dasein* who has been thrown back (from endless repetition) into its awareness of its finitude (a.k.a. *thrownness*). *Authentic dasein* acts in its *thrownness* through appropriation of its heritage and through questions of possibility toward its future disclosed through its appropriations. *Authentic dasein*'s disposition toward its world is with anticipation that the present actions will have bearing upon that future just as its heritage as it *has-been-handed-down* has bearing upon its present.

Care is the sum of the various modes of being of *authentic dasein* (*being-in*, *being-with*, *free-for-death*, etc.) *Authentic dasein*, able to be simultaneously aware of these limits in space and time, and to act upon them (through appropriation of heritage

and questioning toward its futurity) with *anticipatory resoluteness* that those actions will transform those worlds.

Inauthentic dasein is that *ordinary dasein* that has disclosed to itself its finitude, but fails either to appropriate its heritage or to be toward its futurity with questions of possibility. Unable to appropriate its heritage or to anticipate its future through questions of possibility, *inauthentic dasein* remains in a world of sameness, ontologically sterile, always subject to endless repetitions of heritage. Fascism is the natural result of *inauthentic dasein* being collectively as culture (*mitsein inauthentic dasein?*).

Heidegger's *ownness* as *dasein*'s higher power

Earlier I argued that the act of making signs, making an ambiguous signifier mean by associating it with an unambiguous signified, is an act of creation. This creation occurs in language as *dasein* appropriates signifiers in its present context and transposes them into new meanings. Through this mythopoeis, *dasein* one comes to construct itself, the narrative that situates *dasein* within its world.

Inauthentic dasein will succumb to the cultural inertia that surrounds it after emerging from its cocoon, seeking to follow a chain of empty signifiers toward an empty origin, *telos*, *arché*, transcendence in a past that has become irretrievably lost. These *inauthentic dasein*, such as Leader, "fall prey" to their own *thrownness*, falling back from their futurity with an orientation toward their own historicity.

On the other hand *authentic dasein* will continue to transpose its received heritage, undergoing constant metamorphosis as an adult. "Anticipatory resoluteness brings this *being-toward-death* to authentic existence" (BT 357). Heidegger calls this orientation toward present, the ongoing act of willful metamorphosis *free for death*, one's

“ownness.” *Ownness* comes from accepting one’s social responsibility to others in that *mitsein* is constitutive of *dasein*’s being and the finitude of one’s being in the world, while expressing upon that the same social, spatial, and temporal context one’s own transformations of the world through *dasein*’s significations. *Ownness* keeps *dasein* and *other* in constant discourse with interpreted authenticity, avoiding the solipsistic totalizing tendency toward an imagined *telos*, *arché*, or archaeological authenticity.

PLAY

*“If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one’s concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur.”*⁵⁸

In this section, I will first address the fertile possibilities opened up when the central structure is removed. I will revisit the narrative structure of *IQ84*. What will soon become apparent through these examples, however, is how the struggle between fate and free will reflects the Heideggerian themes introduced earlier. Namely that if *authentic dasein* must accept its heritage (i.e., fate) it does so through appropriation (as an act of will). The result is an appropriated narrative, a *bricolage* that bears traces of the past, but offers unexpected, sometimes fortuitous, and sometimes monstrous, permutations of the future.

Let me first briefly restate the nature of the problem of the center that is represented in various names, such as Leader, Big Brother, and so on, with a bit more of Derrida:

the center also closes off the freeplay it opens up and makes possible. Qua center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. At the center, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structures enclosed within a structure) is forbidden. At least this permutation has always remained interdicted (I use this word deliberately). (SSP 279)

Derrida here shares a similar tone to Leader and Murakami’s own interviews about the

⁵⁸ From Derrida’s “Structure, Sign and Play” (SSP 285)

nature of balance between good and evil with regard to the center. The interdiction of the center restricts the possibilities, but it does make possibilities within the structural coherence possible. I have discussed already the ontological desire to cohere as the impetus for the making of signs and thus structures of identity. However, there is already, by the determination of these signs, a limit that is placed on other possible configurations. As radically conceived, we might understand coherence as the polar opposite of freeplay, and see in this a parallel between the opposition of fate and free will; and applied culturally, we could see this binary as cultural homogeneity (fascism) and radical individuality (anarchy). The problem here is that either extreme is impossible, as it would collapse the coherence that is required to perceive it.

As in the case of the Sakigake cult, Fukada *qua* Leader was necessary for the group to cohere, but as it became more insular and subsumed individual will within its collective will, it began to consume its own constituent members in order to survive, as alluded to through incest as a concept, both physically and culturally. On the other extreme, perhaps in the character Ushikawa, hyper individuality results in an organism that fails to cohere as itself within culture (without *mitsein*), and will eventually expel itself from being (Ushikawa dies).

We see the need for an organizing structure with its apprehended center, but that center must always remain in awareness as provisional, a construct of apprehending the structure as the interpreted authenticity of the structure. If the provisional nature is lost, then the balance is lost, and the structure collapses, disintegrating in a futile race to the extreme *telos* or *arché* in search of a feigned archaeological authenticity. Removal of the center in these instances becomes an act of self-preservation of the structure itself, as

social organism or *dasein*, ushering in a revitalization through freeplay until the structure once again begins to ossify.

The repetition of this cycle is noted in Kojin Karatani's *History and Repetition*, where he uses literature to discuss the repetition of the Shōwa era (1926-1989). The slow, reluctant, agonizing decay of Tengen's Father can be seen as a parallel for the slow, reluctant, agonizing decay of the Shōwa Emperor. Author Yukio Mishima's ritual suicide in 1970 is viewed as "[putting] and end to 'the spirit of Shōwa'" (Karatani 83). The years that followed, 1970-1989, were a spiritless repetition of early Shōwa, because as the Emperor aged in body without any authentic spirit, it was forced to cycle back to a period without authenticity. By 1984, NHK had become a prolific sponsor and promoter of *jidaigeki*, Japanese period dramas, that fed a nostalgic hunger for feigned authenticity that, in keeping with Karatani's analysis, may have been the result of the spiritless later Shōwa years. The *jidaigeki* of the 60s, 70s, and 80s recycled tales of the past that projected a reassuring sense of authenticity after the vertiginous generations of the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the World Wars of the early twentieth century.

Following Karatani's interpretation, one could argue that the Emperor as a concept of center had cut off the freeplay of Japanese cultural identity leading to the stagnation of Japan's economy, in the 80s and 90s, and perhaps its culture at large. Of course, this would be a gross oversimplification, though it could serve as one of many possible composite referents to the Sakigake cult with Fukada as its leader, gesturing toward parallels with cultural coherence at a national scale. As with Frazer's *The Golden*

Bough, which gives examples from many cultural traditions that the *King Must Die*,⁵⁹ periodic removal of the center's stranglehold on freeplay is necessary in order to revitalize the culture. A similar tradition is carried out in Japan in the rebuilding of several of the shrines at the Shinto temple precinct in Ise every twenty years,⁶⁰ roughly the generally accepted length of a single generation.

Question unbound⁶¹

The voluntary removal of Leader frees the formation of questions without the impulse to merely reframe the previous question, causing endless iterations around the center.⁶² No longer constrained by Orwell's thesis (as I have construed it), such as "where did Big Brother go?," *IQ84* invites any number of new questions, including questions into the sources of hegemonic power in noncentralized structures. New narratives options, as modes of being, are portrayed both structurally and thematically *IQ84*, in a manner unlike his predecessors.

One question (among many) that both *IQ84* and its predecessors seem to ask is the relative influence the individual may have in the struggle between fate and free will. Earlier I have shown that writing is portrayed as an essential feature of the struggle for stabilizing one's identity. I wish now to claim that the struggle between fate and free will, a negotiation between one's heritage (a past condition) and one's individual being (a present condition) that creates undetermined possibilities (a future condition), occurs as

⁵⁹ Mary Renault's *King Must Die* (1958), is a retelling of the Theseus myth, an account of his youth in Troizen, where the king is ritually murdered every few years in order to maintain the vitality of the kingdom.

⁶⁰ Ise is accepted by many as the location where Japan's supreme Shintō deity, Amaterasu, established the royal line and is believed to house the Sacred Mirror, part of the Imperial Regalia of Japan. The shrines at Ise remain under the care of the Imperial family.

⁶¹ An appropriation of *Prometheus Unbound* by Aeschylus.

⁶² Appropriating Homi K. Bhabha from "The Commitment to Theory" (Bhabha 2386).

discourse that can only occur as ontic writing. Homi K. Bhabha recognizes “the force of writing, its metaphoricity and its rhetorical discourse, as a productive matrix which defines the ‘social’ and makes it available as an objective of and for, action” (Bhabha 2383). Ontic writing is the linguistic aspect of being that enables *dasein* to speak itself, to be an independent *perceiver* of its own cultural heritage and then hand it off, transformed, to its own anticipated futurity as a *receiver*. The uncoupling of discourse from its hegemonic tendency, from its cultural inertia, results in a dialogic “negotiation rather than negation...: a dialectic without the emergence of a teleological or transcendent History” (Bhabha 2385). Bhabha’s “negotiation” here is akin to Heidegger’s “appropriation,” and Derrida’s “*bricolage*.” Bhabha goes on to describe “the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One* (unitary working class) *nor the Other* (politics of gender) but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both” (Bhabha 2388). This mode is made possible only when the centrality of the structure is also not assumed, but is also questioned equally with other questions. Retaining awareness that the apprehended structure’s center is itself a construct—un-reified and un-deified, merely a *gestalt*—it remains accessible to questioning. No longer unquestioned, the *telos* and the *arché* dispatched, archaeological authenticity is finally disclosed as being always already irretrievably lost, merely the product of ongoing iterations of appropriations resulting in only interpreted authenticity.

Free to play

Derrida’s conception of *freeplay* aptly engages the creative act of original authorship, one that *conceives* something other than mere binary alternatives of presence

and absence resulting in *bricolage*. “Freeplay is always an interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be radically conceived, freeplay must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or absence beginning with the possibility of freeplay and not the other way around” (*SSP* 292). Here Derrida emphasizes that freeplay is conceived as the *possibility of play* that precedes the *activity of play* as presence or absence, for without play, presence and absence becomes simple repetition of its opposite, which is ultimately reductive or even sterile. Following Derrida’s gesture with my argument as I have construed it thus far, the *inception of freeplay* occurs with the asking of the previously unasked question that invites the concept of possibility (as apposed to only predestined certainty), which produces the *conception of freeplay* as the *possibility of play* as the interplay of absence and presence. In my own appropriated terms: freeplay is “the *ereignis* of *the question*,” or “the event of *question*” becoming itself as the coherent structure of “*a question*” specifically.

Fecundity of freeplay

The fecundity of freeplay is evident in the parallel narratives of the protagonist dyad that has been kept apart until immediately after Aomame kills Leader in the dark hotel room. The text itself gains a third voice in the character Ushikawa, which unsettles the harmonious binaural aesthetic of the structure of the first two thirds of the book. Immediately following Leader’s removal, Aomame believes she has become pregnant with Tengo’s sperm. Tengo, who had felt that that he was “supposed to get stuck” in a repetition of the appropriated *Town of Cats* story, suddenly gets inspired to write a novel of his own after years of frustration. In both cases, Fuka-Eri is portrayed as the metaphysical conduit enabling both physical and intellectual insemination after the

interdiction imposed by her Father *qua* Leader has been removed.

Aomame ponders many possible explanations for the impossibility of her “immaculate conception,” always in the form of questions she poses to herself as to which explanation she herself would prefer:

But that man was completely different from the men I had killed before. He knew he was about to be murdered, and he wanted it to happen. I actually gave him what he wanted. Not as punishment, but more as an act of mercy. In exchange for which, he gave me what I was seeking. An act of negotiation carried out in a deep, dark place. Very quietly, fertilization took place that night. (IQ84 711)

Ultimately, the story she tells herself as the most satisfactory is that the child is Tengo’s, though they have not seen each other for twenty years, since they were both ten years old. Notice Bhabha’s “negotiation” in Murakami’s language that recognizes the necessity that Aomame’s fate must be negotiated with the remnants of Leader’s free will. The situation sets up a fate vs. free will test for everything about the characters lives, and for the novel. Has everything that has happened since they were both ten years old been predestined to result in Aomame’s carrying Tengo’s child? Here Aomame’s inquiry reveals that the fate versus free will binary is recast as a matter of resolute acceptance and deliberate choice. She simply decides that she has become pregnant, just as she decided to interpret her killing of Leader as *also* an act of mercy. Whatever her fate, she has appropriated it through an act of free will to declare it her own.

Paradoxically yours: Resoluteness and free will

The principle working in both Heidegger and Murakami is that it is the resoluteness with which one asserts their being against their fate that determines the presence of free will, or being as *dasein*. Conversely, Leader *qua* Leader was revealed to have been a passive construct—Fukada made to be Leader through the language of

“Leader” that is demanded by the structure of the cult. To become Leader *qua* Leader was his fate, whereas his only remaining act of free will was to free himself *qua* Leader by embracing his own death.

Consider, then, Aomame’s own pondering about her role in her own fate:

I am not just some passive being mixed up in this because someone else willed it. That might be partly true. But at the same time I chose to be here. I chose to be here of my own free will. She was sure of this. And there’s a clear reason I’m here. One reason alone: so I can meet Tengo again. If you look at it the other way around, that’s the only reason why this world is inside of me. Maybe it’s a paradox, like an image reflected to infinity in a pair of facing mirrors. I am a part of this world, and this world is a part of me. (*IQ84* 855)

In contradistinction to the meticulous use of the passive voice by Leader noted above, Aomame debates her own passivity and ultimately chooses to interpret her interaction with the world as deliberate. She identifies “one reason alone” as the question of possibility to meet Tengo, as the question of possibility that arose of her free will, not as a negation of fate, but a negotiation of possibilities with fate. Also note carefully that she says, to herself, “that’s the reason why this world is inside of me.” I called attention to the uncanny awareness that Leader had of Aomame’s own desires, including that she had come to kill Leader, her having named her world *IQ84*, and even her desire for Tengo. In another mercurial transposition of story, this could also suggest a reason to interpret the entire action of *IQ84* as merely occurring as Aomame’s dream, given that both the first and last individual chapters are hers. Or, as the Christian Science Monitor’s Harnett conjectured, it might be a meditation on loneliness delivered as dialog with in herself in her ontological desire to be with others as *mitsein*. All of these fecund potentialities, possible avenues for freeplay, are made possible by the question that precedes freeplay.

Ordinary questions, extraordinary possibilities

Tengo pondered the nature of questions and writing after sharing Chekov's story of the Gilyaks with Fuka-Eri (I will discuss this story a bit later). "It was probably Chekhov who said that the novelist is not someone who answers questions but someone who asks them" (*IQ84* 264). The question itself wields great power, power to alter the universe itself as it is perceived, signified in the lyrics of *Paper Moon*. The act of forming a question is the inception of free will, of authorship, and the inflection point for *ordinary dasein* to become either *authentic* or *inauthentic*.

The as-yet to be signified nature of a question carries with it an uncertainty, as the question is itself emerging out of a posture of unknowingness toward unknown possibilities. The question as such can be neither good nor bad, but something that is capable of either. However, The disposition toward the uncertainty of a question would be the miniscule force necessary to tip the balance, from interpreting it as good or bad. A disposition of ontological anxiety could lead one to seek nostalgic refuge in the perceived structural certainty of the past by obscuring the interpreted nature of all heritage that *has-been-handed-down*.

Fuka-Eri's strange language without a question was emblematic of her having had her free will suppressed by the dogma of Sakigake, and physically by the incest, both reductive forces that symbolize a return toward one's past. When she discovered her own higher power within, she immediately began inflecting her own context through her assertion of will and left the cult, with the help of her father. Her father succumbed to his fate through the same personification of cultural inertia as the Little People, while Fuka-Eri, as mythopoet, used the same Little People as her interlocutors to pose questions of

possibility that created an opening for her to exert her free will. Forming a question, then, is the extraordinary power of creation, poet as creator, or mythopoesis, which is in turn oriented in its own structure as a questioning in that it invites uncertainty and the unknown possibilities of a future into presence as concepts.

Ordinary ugly mutations

Yet even a question does not arrive, fully formed, *ex nihilo*. It is itself a *bricolage* cobbled together out of whatever is *present-at-hand* by the inexperienced *bricoleur*. What emerges may be an agreeable offspring, or it may be a “hideous progeny.”⁶³ *IQ84*, as Murakami’s own “hideous progeny,” demonstrates the unpredictability of freeplay in its structure and characters when the gynandromorphic narrative skeleton, which had been constrained by the center as symbolized in *Leader*, yields space to the unbalanced character Ushikawa with a narrative thread of his own just as the fertility of the protagonist dyad is exhibited after *Leader*’s removal. From Ushikawa’s first appearance, Tengo notices his unbalanced, asymmetrical, utterly uncategorizable appearance in a detailed description that goes on for nearly two pages:

Owing to the peculiarity (or the uncommonness) of his appearance, the clues necessary for guessing his age were difficult to find. He could have been older than that, or he could have been younger—anywhere between, say, thirty-two and fifty-six. His teeth were crooked, and his spine was strangely curved.... Everything about the man—his face, his body—seemed to have been formed asymmetrically. (*IQ84* 330)

Ushikawa is the hyper-individual monster character, a bug, a spider, an organic mutation defying fascist conformity. Tengo goes on to note, “Our bodies are not mass-produced in

⁶³ “My Hideous Progeny” is the well-know reference by Mary Shelley to her first novel, *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*. *Frankenstein* was published when Shelley was only 19 years old, and said to have autobiographical elements expressing her own anxieties surrounding childbirth. I might argue that her novel was itself an ontic work, through which she navigated her own being.

a factory according to fixed standards. But in this man's case, the differences between right and left went far beyond the bounds of common sense" (*IQ84* 330). The organic variation, even in monstrous proportions, stands at odds to mechanized uniformity that produced anxiety in the early twentieth century, fueling the modern dystopic literature discussed earlier. Ushikawa's hyper-individuality and indescribable asymmetry arises as the opposite extreme of Sakigake's collective; uniformity has been weakened without Leader as the central organizing principle that had previously closed off freeplay.

Like the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Ushikawa's presence is unsettling, as a side-show freak who "could not help but annoy those in his presence and cause them the same kind of discomfort they would feel in front of a funhouse mirror" (*IQ84* 330). The description of Ushikawa is almost of a character that tests the boundaries of coherence as a character, who Charles Baxter labels "a recognizable monster":

the appallingly ugly outcast who listens to the Sibelius Violin Concerto while soaking in the bathtub. People cringe at his approach. Even his children avoid him. An entertainingly satanic figure, he sees it all; nothing escapes him, especially his own repulsiveness. 'He felt like a twisted, ugly person. *So what?* he thought. *I really am twisted and ugly.*' (Baxter 2)

In lovely ironic fashion, Ushikawa's effort to keep Aomame and Tengo apart ends up being the catalyst to break the hermetic seal between the narratives. Ushikawa's asymmetry, as a character and a narrative structure, opens the narrative possibilities to be something other than mere repetition or a clone.

Whither Chekov's gun?

Inevitability, or fate, has already been shown to be contestable; for all the talk that Tamaru had with Aomame about Chekov's gun, she never fires her H&K Model 4.⁶⁴ At one point, Aomame did come very close to death by her own hand:

That morning at the turnout on Metropolitan Expressway No. 3 through Tokyo, I didn't pull the trigger. I really went there, and stuck the muzzle in my mouth, planning to die. I wasn't afraid of death, because I was dying to save Tengo. But some higher power acted on me and snatched me away from death. From far away I heard a voice calling my name. Maybe it called me because I was pregnant? Was something trying to tell me of this new life inside me? (*1Q84* 712)

By obsessively cocking and uncocking the gun, Aomame symbolically presents to herself her own inevitable death, becoming *dasein free for death*. Not only did Aomame face death, fulfilling an essential part of becoming *authentic dasein*, she also seals her fate through an act of free will against the fate represented by the nostalgic nature of Chekov's gun. Gaining power over her own death, symbolically at least, gives Aomame the higher power Heidegger describes as *dasein's ownness*. She finally begins to see herself as temporally bound, *knocked back* from infinite projection of herself into finitude as limited by death. Her spatial confinement in the past is similarly symbolized through her isolation in her room, and her past is symbolized in the repeated attention to her reading Proust's massive tome *In Search of Lost Time*, searching her past for something irretrievably lost.

Aomame debates fate and free will with herself: "What did it mean for a person to be free? ... Even if you managed to escape from one cage, weren't you just in another,

⁶⁴ Instead of simply saying "pistol" or "gun" Murakami is able to say "gun as a concept" by the hyperreal specificity of naming the rare Heckler & Koch Model 4. Firearms are customarily identified by the caliber of the round it shoots, but the H&K Model 4 was a revolutionary pistol with field-interchangeable barrels, enabling it to shoot as many as four different calibers. The H&K Model 4 was produced in Germany from 1968 until 1984.

larger one?” (*IQ84* 184). She searches her own memory for an identifying past—an archaeological authenticity—that she never really had as a child in a cult, the “Society of Witnesses.” Similarly, Tengo was deprived of his ontological center, told symbolically through the (possibly false) memory of his mother offering her breast to a man who was not his father. Both Tengo and Aomame were forced as children to accompany their parents on Sundays, proselyting and distributing tracts, or collecting fees for NHK. By this association, NHK⁶⁵ could be taken as just one of the many possible referents to the concept of “cultural heritage” that is *handed down*, in the same way that Sakigake could allude to any number of possible cults.

The Song the Owl God Sang to Himself

Chekov’s gun is only one part of Chekov’s influence on *IQ84*. Tengo tells Fuka-Eri about the Nivkh/Gilyak⁶⁶ people that Anton Chekhov visited as he recuperated from tuberculosis on his journey to Sakhalin island. Chekhov notes that the Gilyak prefer to walk in the forest, even if their route parallels a modern road built by the Russians. In this seemingly small point, Murakami suggests that the road represents a path already traveled, so to walk there is to repeat the past, to *be, inauthentically*. The Gilyak prefer to make each journey an authentic one, by walking in the forest of the unknown, even if that journey ends at the same destination.

The Gilyaks have no written language until sometime after the famous Russian author tells their story abroad. Chekov’s account of the disappearing Gilyak people

⁶⁵ NHK was formed in 1926, under the reign of the Taishō emperor and the beginning of the Shōwa reign. 1926 is also the same year Heidegger’s completed *Being and Time*.

⁶⁶ Gilyak is the name used in *IQ84* and presumably in Russian for the people of Northern Sakhalin Island who referred to themselves as the Nivkh. I will keep with Murakami’s use of Gilyak for clarity in this context.

became the catalyst for subsequent attempts to document their culture before it disappeared. But significant for our purposes is that the Gilyaks, who had been pushed to near extinction by the Russian settlers in the late 1800s, had already been displaced from Southern Sakhalin by another displaced group of settlers, Japan's indigenous Ainu. Like the Gilyaks, the Ainu had no written language until a foreigner, the English Missionary John Batchelor, compiled and published the first lexicon and grammar for the Ainu Language in 1901. A young Ainu woman, 19-year-old Chiri Yukie, completed the first anthology of Ainu folktales in 1922.⁶⁷

It may seem peculiar that Murakami, a Japanese author, turns to the fate of a foreign indigenous group, Russia's Gilyak people of Sakhalin island, through another author's work, when a similar story is ready at hand on his own direct heritage. Murakami's appropriation of the Gilyak story gives a new but familiar cultural interlocutor through which he can explore Japan's own isolation and expansion and its impact on the Ainu. Again, as we have already seen in the concept of "cult," "Leader," and so on, the Gilyak/Ainu associations serve as the concept of "indigenous culture" contesting the authenticity of such a conception.

At the same time, Murakami has further complicated the meaning of what it means to be authentically Japanese through the Tamaru story. Tamaru is many times over *not* Japanese by the more insular measures. He was born in Ainu territory of Korean parents, but raised to adulthood by adoptive Japanese parents. Both the Ainu and Koreans have at times historically been subjected to oppression and racism. However, Tamaru is himself more Japanese than anything else. The Japanese antipathy toward the Ainu is

⁶⁷ Yukie died the night she completed the manuscript of sudden heart failure. Yet her writing inscribed her being into Ainu and Japanese cultures, inflecting the fate of both.

only now being softened. *IQ84* was released in Japan the year after the Japanese government finally implemented legal changes to formally recognize the Ainu as an indigenous people of Japan, after the 2007 “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” The UN declaration forced Japan to finally explicitly acknowledge the insular culture that has lived within the same territory for centuries. It seems that even in the relatively homogenous culture of Japan, with its highly idiomatic language and culture, archaeological authenticity is as illusory as an Ukiyo-E, a thinly veiled nostalgic forgetting that continuously paints a picture of a floating world, over the interpreted authenticity that is always being re-interpreted.

Sanshō the Bailiff

When asked about her own interests in literature, Fuka-Eri tells Tengu, her co-author who rewrites *Air Chrysalis*, that her favorite tales are none other than Japan’s own foundation myths. She lists: The *Tale of the Heike*, a narrative poem handed down through oral tradition which Fuka-Eri could recite in its entirety, and *Tales of Times Now Past*, a collection of folk-tales also handed down through oral tradition. Recalling the earlier discussion of Fuka-Eri’s name as I chose to interpret it, as “Profoundly Nostalgic *Gestalt*,” I might cast it again in new terms familiar to this thesis, “History as Profound *Gestalt*.” Taken together, Fuka-Eri’s name, her own mythopoesis in the form of *Air Chrysalis*, and her affinity toward literature that serves as the foundation for Japan’s cultural identity, its mythic ur-texts, solidifies our interpreted understanding of her as an authentic *bricoleur*, and her myth *Air Chrysalis* as an appropriation of her own heritage woven into a new tale.

When Tengu asks Fuka-Eri if she reads any modern literature, she names Mori

Ogai's *Sanshō the Bailiff*, written in 1915. *Sanshō the Bailiff* happens to be a marvelously told retelling of a very old Japanese legend of unknown authorship about a virtuous feudal lord, who voluntarily gives up his domain to right a wrong and reunites with his banished mother. The themes of *Sanshō* certainly resonate with the aria of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* (BWV 244) and *IQ84* itself, with the voluntary removal of the central figure (i.e., Jesus, Emperor, Sanshō, Leader). The editors of *Unesco's Historical Literature of Mori Ōgai* describe Ōgai's simple masterpiece in a way that mirrors Komatsu's own assessment of Fuka-Eri's prose discussed near the beginning of this thesis: "Ōgai's deceptively plain language, so difficult to render into satisfactory English, masks a sophisticated arrangement of plot elements and an absolute mastery of physical detail" (Mori 123). Ōgai's prose is simple, direct, almost sparse, but it is not simplistic. What is emphasized in this comment is that the *arrangement* of plot and physical detail adds to the emotional presence of the work. Like Murakami's work, the *structure* of the prose adds to his retelling of the legend.

Quite significant to my project here, that of the fecund appropriation of history that reproduces a newly authentic work, the Unesco edition notes that *Sanshō the Bailiff* is recognized as one of the gems of modern literature. However, Ōgai's masterpiece is itself an appropriation of a legend, tinged with Buddhist moral authority, that was itself likely based upon early texts originating in China, as is the case with many of Japan's treasured folktales found in the *Konjaku Monogatari* I mentioned in footnote 48 above. The gesture here calls attention to the fact that, without the foreign influence of Chinese writing, there would be no Japanese *history as it has been handed down*. There may be something else, but that is not the reality of our present. Japan's xenophobic posture

toward the Koreans and Ainu living among them belies their own hybrid history in a way that is counter to the *care* that Heidegger asserts is necessary to receive history as that cultural object that *has been handed down*.

Finally, in another characteristically Murakami style multilayered association, we can recognize the repetition in the titles of Fuka-Eri's source of inspiration and that of Aomame's: *Konjaku Monogatari* is, in English, *Tales of Times Now Past*, and Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, is *A Search for Lost Time*. Each of these titles position the present in opposition to, yet retain a relationship with, the past. Compare Murakami's characters symbolically searching for a sense of identity rooted in an imagined authentic past. Each text (*Konjaku Monogatari* and *A Search for Lost Time*) is a symbol and/or source of the past that *has-been-handed-down*, but Murakami's characters appropriate this past by weaving a narrative of their own, making a new sensibility out of the fragments of this past and mixed with many other past and present sources.

INCONCLUSIVE

*I employ these words, I admit, with a glance toward the business of childbearing—
but also with a glance toward those who,
in a company from which I do not exclude myself,
turn their eyes away in the face of the as yet unnamable
which is proclaiming itself and which can do so,
as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing,
only under the species of the non-species,
in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.*⁶⁸

In *IQ84*, the appropriation of story, the acquisition, transposition, and subsequent telling of the story, has become the *event of the text*, its own *ereignis*. The transpositions are such that the story is not about a problem that can be transposed because it instead offers a structure in which questions about it are made possible. This is why I have come to view *IQ84* as a mythomorphic discourse, an ongoing discourse about making the myth of one's own being, rather than a novel about some stable message awaiting to be disclosed. As mythomorphic, it becomes a text about what happens at the moment of appropriating, which I have suggested is the *ereignis* of *authentic dasein*.

As *event*, the *IQ84* is self-aware in its dialog with its context, thereby resisting the mechanical, mathematical replication and consumption as an unaltered idea that was the fear of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell. And as a *dialogical event*, it has no center of its own, though I have excavated an apparent archaeological authenticity for the text itself, even arriving at the epicenter; this is only a feigned structure as I have appropriated it.

⁶⁸ From Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play" (*SSP* 293).

Instead, as literary *dasein*, *IQ84* weaves its own presence through the very act of its own being; a being that is the performance of the text by telling (or reading) it.

Contextualizing is itself an *event* that transposes, or “inflects a context, and in so doing appeals for a new one” (*Secret* 19). In this sense *IQ84* is a self-aware textual *dasein*, a *global dialogical event* involving its author in dialog with its reviewers just as its characters are in dialog with the global themes and embedded stories within. Again, the Guardian’s Haddow:

But it must be understood that the underlying message of any “global event novel” is always singular in its defence of literature. If only for a moment, it proves that the novel, “a solitary island floating in the sea of capitalism”, remains a relevant medium. (Haddow)

By the year 1984, it seemed that global capitalism had vanquished all of the totalitarian fears centered on IngSoc, World State and One World. Instead, globalized technology economies seem to have threatened literature’s relevance. Mikhail Gorbachev would soon introduce the world to *glasnost*, and *perestroika*. In 1989, barely five years after Orwell’s imagined scene, the Berlin Wall would be torn down by emboldened masses, and the Shōwa emperor would “go to another world” after having been the longest reigning, and only un-deified emperor in Japan’s history. The hyper-real detail of Tokyo as a location, (recalling here Murakami’s interview in *Monkey Business*) almost belies global view forming the backbone of the narrative for *IQ84*. This contrast demonstrates literature’s productive resilience as it attempts to transform specific modernist dystopias into global postmodern worlds, but it has also profited by the very capitalism that seemed to have threatened the species.

IQ84 has also successfully recontextualized Orwell’s text by exploring configurations beyond the sterile binaries that consumed Orwell and his predecessors.

Murakami truly does do away with Big Brother, insomuch as Big Brother is no longer the autonomous force at the center of the social structure oppressing and subjugating all around, but is instead the co-arisen necessity of the social structure woven out of nothingness by the Little People who constitute the cultural inertia.

The mythomorphoric investigation into sources of hegemony as co-arising out of heritage also opens up the possibility of individual and cultural forgiveness. Such was the case by Hannah Arendt's statement "the banality of evil," regarding Adolf Eichmann at the trial of Nazi War Criminal. Arendt argues that Eichmann was merely an ordinary man caught up in the banal evil of the hegemonic Nazi mythos as interpreted. Like Murakami's Little People or Heidegger's paradigm for *dasein*, the ordinary woodcutter, Eichman began as *ordinary dasein* with the potential to become good or evil, *authentic or inauthentic dasein*, but without any inevitable fate to do so. The tipping point hinges on the small, nearly imperceptible exercise of free will to choose one's fate, to write one's own narrative.

Is Murakami calling our attention today to a risk that might deny us our ability to write our own authentic story? Do our modern communication technologies, smartphones, Google, Facebook, and Twitter, threaten our ability to inflect our own trajectory? Will we be buried by prepackaged memories of global Internet memes gone viral, injected directly to our minds⁶⁹ without our awareness as we focus our attention on increasingly narrow screens and narrow points of view? Is the dispersal of Big Brother's centralized power now literally in our hands as we spy on and condemn each other on social media? Or, will this same avenue give us an opening into possibilities we could not

⁶⁹ Appropriating Phillip K. Dick, who would sell those narratives to you wholesale.

have imagined before? It seems to me that Murakami is asking questions, not giving warnings, but also leaving us messages. Perhaps the single message, a *gestalt* of all the above observations, is that our fate is now, literally, and literarily, in our own hands.

Ontic writing: to transpose the question of being

The New York Times' Schulz points us in the right direction by calling attention to the problem that is *supposedly* being transposed in *IQ84*. We might turn to the stories embedded within *IQ84* for a provisional answer, especially Chekov's tale of the Gilyaks. Remember that the Gilyaks would go "walking through the thick forest in line beside the road with their dogs and women, hardly speaking" (*IQ84* 227). There is a lot of forest talk in *IQ84* itself, in addition to the Gilyaks' story. The dowager's butterflies, ignorant of their own existence, reside deep in a forest. Aomame likens herself to "an animal released into a new forest" (*IQ84* 110) when she comes to accept her new world and names it with a "Q." It is her job to sort it out for herself. And for Tengo, after having been inspired by the act of rewriting and experiencing Fuka-Eri's *Air Chrysalis*, he begins to let go of the certain world of mathematics that "stretched infinitely upward toward the heavens" (*IQ84* 177), for the "forest of story, [where] there was never a clear-cut solution" (178). As well, the Little People, with all their unaligned power, also come out of the forest, when the clear-cut organizing center of the Leader is removed (recall Frazer's *The Golden Bough*). There is something very primal, then, in the role of story, which Tengo himself ponders:

The role of story was, in the broadest terms, to transpose a single problem into another form. Depending on the nature and direction of the problem, a solution could be suggested in the narrative. Tengo would return to the real world with that suggestion in hand. It was like a piece of paper bearing the indecipherable text of

a magic spell. At times it lacked coherence and served no immediate practical purpose. *But it would contain a possibility.* (*IQ84* 178, italics added)

IQ84 performs Derrida's freeplay, showing that the power and *possibility of story* to transpose an existing problem *is the story*, in much the same way that *IQ84* has transformed the existing problem presented in Orwell's *1984*, into an entirely new question.

Fuka-Eri came to be herself not by simply telling her story, but it is in the telling of her story that she came to become herself and disclosed the being that had been obscured by the hegemony of her multilayered isolations. Tengo recognized this by their first meeting, having read the draft of *Air Chrysalis*. "You transform the scenes you see into your own words and reconstruct them. And you confirm your own existence.[...] You gave shape to that process. In the form of the work you wrote" (*IQ84* 46). True to her name as "Nostalgic *Gestalt*," we see her perceiving scenes of her individual and cultural past as a collection of folklore fragments—a nostalgic *gestalt*, and then transforming those scenes into her own words, as *authentic* writing. Her story, *Air Chrysalis*, arrived as language, but it was the emergence of that language itself within her being and expressed to her inner-interlocutor, that produced her as being herself, confirming her being to herself.

The act of writing her story—actually telling it orally to her friend Azami who writes it—has liberated her to see herself as *dasein* among other *dasein* (*mitsein*), which prompts her to see the same process repeated in the Gilyaks; "The Gilyaks live in Sakhalin and are like the Ainu and American Indians: they don't have writing. They don't leave records. I'm the same. Once it gets written down, the story is not mine anymore" (*IQ84* 299). The primacy of writing shows up here for the reasons stated above

about making signs. Without the ability to place the meaning outside the organism (a person or a culture), those meanings are not stabilized in a place and time, thus always subject to change. Orwell's Winston Smith faced this problem with the speakwrite, and Fuka-Eri understood the same problem: "The Little People may be mad that they were put into writing" (*IQ84* 299). Cultural hegemony in *1984* and in *IQ84* personified as the Little People succeeds by its ability to feign a history as bearing archaeological authenticity. Yet ironically, writing itself is the sign made in the present that throws history into its irretrievable past. Fuka-Eri's dyslexia led to have her story written by her friend Azami, to stabilize her meaning in a specific place and time, enabling her to occupy that finite world in the present.⁷⁰ However, without the cultural coherence made solid by embodying it in writing, it cannot possess the sense of futurity required for *dasein*, to be *handed-down* to the self in turn. There is no difference, thus no time. The Little People, as cultural inertia, are at risk of an Eternal Recurrence of the past in the present, undifferentiated.

I turn toward a provisional conclusion with a statement by Koyama Tetsuro, from the chapter "Balance of Good and Evil" in his book, *Getting Comfortable Reading Haruki Murakami*.

Furthermore, in Book 3 of *IQ84* the "Guardian Angel [Protector god] of the woods," "Who gives us the wisdom of the night," appears in the form of an owl. Tengo, after smoking some hashish, says, "I have an owl inside me." Tengo has himself become as protector god of the woods, and like Prof. Ebisuno, "possesses deep wisdom," and has become able to avoid the dangers of the woods. Fuka-Eri says, "In order to avoid being harmed by the Little People, one must find the thing that the Little People don't have. If one does that, one can safely avoid the woods." Following the words that Fuka-Eri recorded on that tape, let's enumerate the things that by the end, the Little People did not possess in *IQ84*. They are:

⁷⁰ Fuka-Eri later takes to recording audio messages. Other forms of "recording" to establish the fixity of the message are all equally effective media to carry out the work of ontic writing.

Being alone. Singing songs. Telling one's own story. If one can do these things, we should be able to 'safely avoid the woods.' (Tetsuro 163)

What the Little People do not have is the telling of their own story. Not some particular story as an object they borrow from their own past and retell unmodified in eternal recurrence, but a truly authentic event of transposing their own individuality into a present context. In other words, it is not the absence of a particular story, but that absence of the telling of a unique story that makes Little People be little. Without this, the result is the horror of totalitarian regimes, even fascism as "cultural incest."

"The Floating Bridge of Dreams"

Tengo, unlike the traveler about whom he reads and feels drawn toward, does leave the *Town of Cats* and begins to write his own story. Aomame does leave her apartment, having found her destiny after reading an undisclosed but significant part of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. Fuka-Eri no longer needs to write, one story was enough,⁷¹ and while one can assume that her future will bear scars from her past, she has gained the use of the question mark enabling her to face her future with questions of possibility. So, while Tengo and Aomame do ascend the metal stairs holding hands in the last chapter that is given to both their characters, returning to the elevated expressway that rings Tokyo is almost as if returning to a "Floating Bridge of Dreams." However, the story has taken a turn. It may be no coincidence that Aomame's obsession with her "special ice-pick" is that it resembles a writing stylus, and that Fuka-Eri's *Air Chrysalis*

⁷¹ Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), admitted to have been semi-autobiographical, is set in the year 1936. "To Kill a Mockingbird, which follows the trial of a black man accused of raping a white girl, was first published on 11 July 1960. Named best novel of the 20th century by American librarians" (Flood). Like Fuka-Eri, Harper Lee wrote only one novel, and lived "as a reclusive author," or simply a private life, rarely granting interviews and even more rarely talked about her own novel.

was first spoken, just as sentences as threads are drawn out of thin air. For all three characters, only the slightest nudge of free will was needed to write themselves upon the context of their own worlds, enabling each to emerge as *authentic dasein* in a world full of questions still waiting to be asked.

CODA

Ontic writing is observed in the act of writing the story of self, as the event of *dasein's ereignis*. Ontic writing brings the author into the world authorship as the writer not of destinies, but of possibilities in the unknowable future of being *who*, as in Mistuo Aida's haiku, the epigraph that opened this thesis: "I do not become myself, who becomes me."⁷² Like Fuka-Eri's idiomatic language that lacks a question mark, Aida's poem lacks the interrogative particle 「か」 to form a proper question, leaving the "who" to stand awkwardly as a simple pronoun with an uncertain referent. The result produces an anticipation for the question, "who?" but leaves it with an implication of being the referent to the future *I* to which the speaker is oriented, as in "I become the question of myself."

Perhaps it would be fitting, by way of conclusion, to let our rewriter, Tengo, have the last word, in a response to why he writes fiction, with a perfectly reasonable and ordinary definition of the mode of being *authentic dasein* that I call ontic writing:

When I'm writing a story,⁷³ I use words to transform the surrounding scene into something more natural for me. In other words, I reconstruct it. That way, I can confirm without a doubt that this person known as 'me' exists in the world.
(*IQ84* 46)

⁷² Poet and calligrapher Mitsuo Aida (1924-1991) was born two years before, and died two years after, the Shōwa period. His most well-known work, 「にんげんだもの」 (*Because I'm human*) was published in 1984. "As a brush-and-ink calligrapher and poet, Mitsuo Aida continued to pursue his own words and his own calligraphy, not imitating anyone." (<http://www.mitsuo.co.jp/museum/foreign/>)

⁷³ Tengo specifically notes that he confirms his own existence *in the act of writing*, not through the product, as in the story that is written.

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